

On Top Of The News Email:news@arubatoday.com website: www.arubatoday.com Tel:+297 582-7800 Thursday, February 20, 2014



President Barack Obama, left, Mexico's President Enrique Pena Nieto, center, and Prime Minister of Canada Stephen Harper pose for photographers at the North American Leaders Summit in Toluca, Mexico, Wednesday, Feb. 19, 2014.

(AP Photo/Eduardo Verdugo)

Obama meets North American leaders in Mexico



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At Press Time:

Venezuela awaits fate of jailed opposition leader

ANDREW ROSATI BEN FOX Associated Press

CARACAS, Venezuela (AP) — After spending the night in a military jail, Venezuelan opposition leader Leopoldo Lopez waited to learn Wednesday if he would be charged for violence that has erupted

during protests that have revitalized challenges to 15 years of socialist rule in the oil-rich nation.

Lopez was due to appear before a judge in a closed hearing a day after dramatically surrendering to authorities before thousands of cheering supporters. He was expected to learn what charges he would face for organizing mass demonstrations that have resulted in at least five deaths and more than 100 injuries over the past week.

The government of President Nicolas Maduro has accused Lopez, a 42-year-old former mayor and the leader of the Popular Will party, of attempting to foment a coup in the South American nation and authorities had said he could face charges that include homicide and causing grievous bodily harm. A judicial official told The Associated Press that prosecutors were leaning toward discarding homicide and terrorism charges, opting instead to pursue less serious counts such as arson and incitement to commit crimes. That would allow the possibility of Lopez being released pending trial, according to the official, who agreed to discuss the matter only if not quoted by name because the decision had not been made public.

Hundreds of supporters waited outside the courthouse for news of the decision, watched over by National Guard troops. Caracas Mayor Antonio Ledezma, a member of a different opposition party, showed up at one point in a sign of unity among the foes of the Maduro government.

"We are all united in demanding the release of Leopoldo Lopez," Ledezma told the AP. "We are rallying behind him."

The crowd dissipated after hours of waiting when officials decided to hold the court hearing at the military jail outside Caracas where Lopez was being detained.

The opposition has planned nationwide marches for Saturday to protest both his detention as well as the rampant crime, shortages of consumer goods and inflation rate of more than 50 percent that has made life difficult for many in the country of nearly 30 million people.

The jailing of Lopez has made him a cause celebre among opponents of Maduro, eclipsing to some degree Henrique Capriles, the opposition's twotime losing presidential candidate who was building support for another challenge in two years.

Capriles attended a rally on Feb. 12 in Caracas led by Lopez but did not appear on the stage to address the masses of demonstrators. Clashes with police erupted afterward, after the opposition leaders had left, and resulted in three deaths.

Maduro accused Lopez of leading a "fascist" plot to oust the socialist government, the political leagcy of the late Hugo Chavez, and authorities issued an arrest warrant for him. He surrendered theatrically on Tuesday, dressed in white to signify peace, adorned with a crucifix from his wife and surrounded by a sea of supporters.

Ukraine:

President, protest leaders agree on truce

KIEV, Ukraine (AP) — Ukraine's embattled president and leaders of the protests roiling the country agreed Wednesday on a truce, following a flareup of violence that left at least 26 people dead in the capi-

A brief statement on the presidential website said President Viktor Yanukovych met with opposition leaders and they called for a truce and for negotiations on ending bloodshed to begin.

The statement did not give details of what a truce second night, as protesters demanding Yanukovych's resignation showed no sign of yielding.

Wednesday urged Ukraine to avoid violence against peaceful protesters or face consequences, as the United States considered joining European partners to impose sanctions aimed at ending deadly street clashes that are sparking fears of civil war.

"There will be consequences if people step over the

fuse leapt into the air for a Union called an extraordinary meeting of its 28 member countries on Thursday to address the situation.

French Foreign Minister President Barack Obama Laurent Fabius told reporters in Paris that he and his counterparts from Germany and Poland would travel to Ukraine, meeting with the Ukrainian government and opposition before the emergency EU meeting. EU sanctions would typically include banning leading officials from traveling to the EU countries and freezing their assets there.

Obama said he is monitor-



Anti-government protesters throw stones during clashes with riot police in Kiev's Independence Square, the epicenter of the country's current unrest, Kiev, Ukraine, Wednesday, Feb. 19, 2014. The deadly clashes in Ukraine's capital have drawn sharp reactions from Washington, generated talk of possible European Union sanctions and led to a Kremlin statement blaming Europe and the West.

(AP Photo/Efrem Lukatsky)

would entail or how it would be implemented.

The statement also did not specify how the negotiations would be conducted or give an indication of how they could be different from previous meetings of the president and the opposition leaders.

But one of the protest leaders, Vitali Klitschko, was auoted by the Interfax news agency as saying after the meeting that Yanukovych had ensured them there would be no attempt to storm the protesters' encampment on the main square of downtown Kiev. There, flames from burning barricades of tires and re-

line," Obama said shortly after landing in Mexico for a summit with the leaders of Mexico and Canada, as fires burned in central Kiev. "And that includes making sure that the Ukrainian military does not step in to what should be a set of issues that can be resolved by civilians."

Shortly after Obama's remarks, Ukrainian President Viktor Yanukovych's office said he and opposition leaders had agreed on a truce, although the brief statement offered no details about what it would entail or how it would be implemented.

Meanwhile, the European

ing the Ukrainian violence "very carefully."

"We expect the Ukrainian government to show restraint and to not resort to violence when dealing with peaceful protesters," Obama said.

"We hold the Ukrainian government primarily responsible for making sure that it is dealing with peaceful protesters in an appropriate way, that the Ukrainian people are able to assemble and speak freely about their interests without fear of repression," Obama said, adding he also expects protesters to remain peaceful.



U.S. navy ship deployed near Sochi aground

PAULINE JELINEK Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — One of two U.S. warships dispatched to the Black Sea before the Sochi Winter Olympics remains in a Turkish port after running aground last week, the Navy said Wednesday.

The frigate USS Taylor is being inspected for damage after it ran aground Feb. 12 while preparing to moor at Samsun, Turkey, about 230 miles (370 kilometers) southwest of Sochi. A Turkish official said it may be repaired in a day or two.

Lt. Shawn Eklund, a Navy spokesman in Europe, said that even with the Taylor sidelined, the U.S. would still be able to respond, should Russia ask for help with any crisis. The Taylor and the USS Mount Whitney were sent to the Black Sea after an uptick in security threats around the Olympics, although the Pentagon said the U.S. warships were deployed as part of normal military planning and could perform any required missions, including communications or evacuations.

"The Navy is still prepared to render support to the Russian Federation in the event of a crisis or contingency operation," Eklund said in a phone interview Wednesday.

He said he could not go into detail on what other things the Navy has done to prepare, but officials said repeatedly have that they have assets that could be called into action for a variety of potential missions.

"The Navy has ships available for multiple taskings, assets that could be called upon, should they be the appropriate asset, and should the State Department request them," Defense Department spokeswoman Eileen Lainez said Wednesday. "There's been no request at this time."

The USS Mount Whitney, an amphibious command ship, and the USS Taylor, a guided-missile frigate, arrived in the Black Sea early this month.

Obama meets North American leaders in Mexico

JIM KUHNHENN **Associated Press**

TOLUCA, Mexico (AP) — President Barack Obama sought to reassure leaders of Mexico and Canada Wednesday of his commitment to new trade agreements between Asia, the Pacific and the Americas, even as he faces political resistance in the U.S. from

Force One and onto a red carpet to be welcomed by an honor guard. Cloudless skies and warm breezes set a sunny mood as Obama walked to his limo to be shuttled to an ornate government complex nearby. Obama opened his trip with a bilateral meeting with Mexican President Enrique Pena Nieto, a discus-

Obama and Pena Nieto then joined Canadian Prime Minister Stephen Harper for a working lunch in Toluca's lush botanical gardens. The three leaders also planned to hold a joint press conference Wednesday night before Obama returned to Washington.

The one-day meeting is being overshadowed by the

President Barack Obama, Mexican President Enrique Peña Nieto, and Canadian Prime Minister Stephen Harper leave a photo opp at the Cosmovitral stained glass botanical garden in Toluca, Mexico, Wednesday, Feb. 19, 2014, before the seventh trilateral North American Leaders Summit Meeting. This year's theme is "North American Competitiveness."

members of his own Democratic party.

Obama arrived earlier in the day in the industrial center of Toluca, about 40 miles west of Mexico City, for the start of a oneday North American Leaders Summit. Flanked by his trade negotiator and top Cabinet secretaries, Obama stepped off Air sion the U.S. leader said would focus in part on how to advance the Trans-Pacific Partnership, a trade bloc of 12 countries in the Americas, Asia and the Pacific. Obama said the TPP agreement "offers the opportunity to open up new markets in the fastest, most populous region of the world."

(AP Photo/Jacquelyn Martin)

violence that erupted half a world away in Ukraine as the government of President Viktor Yanukovych cracks down on protesters in Kiev. During brief remarks at the start of his meeting with Pena Nieto, Obama said the United States condemned the violence in Ukraine "in the strongest terms."

Officials said the U.S. was weighing its options against those responsible for the violence, including consulting with the European Union on the use of sanctions. It's not the first of Obama's foreign trips to be eclipsed by unrelated events.

The summit occurs on the 20th year of the North American Free Trade Agreement among the three countries, a deal that has vastly expanded cross-border commerce in the region but that remains a contentious issue in the United States over its impact on jobs and on environmental protections.

Trade experts say the agreement is due for an upgrade to take into account the current globalized environment and to address issues not touched in the original pact. But rather than reopen NAFTA, the three countries are instead relying on negotiations underway to complete the TPP pact.

The Obama administration is hoping those negotiations are completed this year. The U.S. is also in the midst of negotiations over a Trans-Atlantic Trade and Investment Partnership with the European Union. But the president is facing stiff election-year resistance from Democratic leaders over his desire to get "fast track" trade authority, which would require Congress to give yes-or-no votes on the trade agreements without the opportunity to amend them.

US warns airlines of new shoe bomb threat

ALICIA A. CALDWELL KIMBERLY DOZIER Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The U.S. Homeland Security has warned airlines that terrorond time in less than three weeks that the government has issued a warning about possible attempts to smugale explosives on a commercial jetliner.

Homeland Security said Wednesday it regularly shares relevant information that DHS released a notice

with domestic and internation airlines reiterating that tional partners, but it declined to discuss specifics of a warning sent to airlines. "Our security apparatus includes a number of ists could try to hide explo- measures, both seen and sives in shoes. It's the sec- unseen, informed by the latest intelligence and as always DHS continues to adjust security measures to fit an ever evolving threat environment," the department said in a statement. A U.S. intelligence official told The Associated Press

liquids, shoes and certain cosmetics were of concern, all of which are covered under existing Transportation Security Administration security policies.

The latest warning was focused on flights headed to the United States from abroad.

The official said "something caused DHS concern, but it's a very low threshold to trigger a warning like this." The official spoke on condition of anonymity because

he was not authorized to discuss the issue publicly. Earlier this month Homeland Security warned airlines with flights to Russia to be on the lookout for explosive devices possibly hidden inside toothpaste. The Transportation Security Administration then banned passengers from bringing any liquids in their carry-on luggage on nonstop flights from the U.S. to Russia. That warnina became public just days before the opening ceremonies of the Winter Olympics in Sochi.



Los Angeles bishop kept altar boy list from police

GILLIAN FLACCUS Associated Press

LOS ANGELES (AP) — When Los Angeles police were investigating allegations of child abuse by a Roman Catholic priest in 1988, they asked for a list of altar boys at the last parish where the

scarred by the investigation and that he felt the altar boys were too old to be potential victims, according to a February 2013 deposition made public Wednesday. The detectives investigating allegations against Nicolas Agui-

10 months in Los Angeles, according to the priest's confidential archdiocese file and police records made public by attorneys for the victims. Twenty-five of the alleged victims were altar boys and the 26th

at least 26 boys during his

In this 2008 photo, Cardinal Roger Mahony officiates during Ash Wednesday services at the Cathedral of Our Lady of the Angels in Los Angeles. (AP Photo/Nick Ut)

priest worked.

Archbishop Roger Mahony told a subordinate not to give the list, saying he didn't want the boys to be

lar Rivera, a visiting Mexican priest, ultimately got the names of the boys from parish families. They determined the priest molested

was training with the priest to be one, said Anthony DeMarco, a plaintiff attorney. It's not clear what impact Mahony's action had on the investigation, though at the time police complained that the archdiocese wasn't fully cooperating.

Mahony's deposition was obtained by The Associated Press and is part of the evidence included in a settlement of abuse claims against Aguilar Rivera and four other priests. The archdiocese, the nation's largest, agreed to pay \$13 million to 17 victims.

Since 2006, the archdiocese has paid more than \$700 million to settle clergy abuse lawsuits by hundreds of victims. Internal church files kept on priests accused of abuse were released last year under court order. They showed that Mahony, who was elevated to cardinal and retired in 2011, maneuvered behind the scenes with his top aide, Monsianor Thomas Curry, to shield molester priests, provide damage control for the church and keep parishioners in the dark. When the files were released, prosecutors said the cases fell outside the statute of limitations for criminal prosecution of any church officials.

Mahony's sworn testimony

in the case of Aquilar Rivera is significant because it's the first time he has been questioned under oath about clergy abuse since the confidential church files were released. During past depositions, attorneys haven't had documents to back up their questions, DeMarco said.

"This time when he's trying to do the 'I don't remember' routine, I put the document in front of him and said, 'You wrote this, right?'" he said.

J. Michael Hennigan, an attorney with the archdiocese, said Mahony didn't reveal a list of altar boys, also called altar servers, to police because he didn't believe any of the alleged victims were among them. Mahony was in Rome on Wednesday and was not available to comment, Hennigan said.

"My recollection is at the time that memo was written there was no suggestion that altar servers were involved," the attorney said, adding that Mahony was "very vigorous" in trying to get Aguilar Rivera brought back to the U.S. for prosecution after he fled.

"What I know is there came a time when whatever the police wanted we gave them and it was shortly after this, but I don't know if the police ever reissued that request," he said of the list. Aguilar Rivera was accused in January 1988 by two families who told church officials that he had fondled their children and, in one instance, climbed into bed with a boy after drinking too much during a Christmas celebration at the family's home.

The priest was told about the complaints by Curry and fled to Mexico before police were notified. He remains a fugitive and is believed to be in Mexico.

Church files released last year show that Mahony ordered Curry to withhold the altar boy list from the LAPD.

In a Jan. 26, 1988, handwritten note on a memo about the police request for a list, Mahony wrote, "We cannot give such a list for no (sic) cause whatsoever."

FBI confirms civil rights activist was killed in 1973

DIRK LAMMERS Associated Press SIOUX FALLS, South Dakota (AP) — The FBI says a black civil rights activist was killed during the 1973 occupation of Wounded Knee, and it suspects militant members of the American Indian Movement are responsible, according to recently released documents.

Hundreds of pages of reports provided to Buffalo, New York, attorney Michael Kuzma shed new light on the 40-year-old case of Ray Robinson, an activist and follower of Martin Luther King Jr. Kuzma sued the U.S. Justice Department in June in an effort to help Robinson's widow, Cheryl Buswell-Robinson, and their children aet some closure.

The father of three from Boaue Chitto, Alabama, traveled to South Dakota's

Pine Ridge Indian Reservation in April 1973 to stand alongside Native Americans in their fight against social injustice. The 71day standoff between AIM members and federal agents at Wounded Knee left at least two tribal members dead and a federal agent seriously wounded. The occupation is credited with raising awareness about Native American struggles.

He never returned and his body was never found.

Buswell-Robinson, of Detroit, said her husband's nonviolent approach conflicted with the violent situation at Wounded Knee, and it's possible AIM members suspected he was a federal informant. The personable black man with a deep baritone voice would have stood out on a Midwest American Indian reservation, she said.

Robinson's family just wants to bring his remains home for a proper burial.

"My daughter Desiree wants a place to go so she can sit and talk to her father," Buswell-Robinson told The Associated Press. "She remembers him. She's the oldest.'

According to the FBI documents, an unidentified cooperating witness told agents that "Robinson had been tortured and murdered within the AIM occupation perimeter, and then his remains were buried 'in the hills.'"

The location of Robinson's remains is a mystery, and any search or excavation attempts would likely be complicated by the reservation's sovereign status. Buswell-Robinson and her two daughters traveled to Wounded Knee in 2004 to walk in an area rumored to be Robinson's possible

resting place and the site of the Denby bunker, where witnesses say Robinson engaged with AIM members.

Another

witness

told

Robinson agents that was in Wounded Knee for about a week and seemed to have difficulty adjusting to the conditions of having no food, the area constantly being under fire and unilateral AIM command. That witness said Robinson immediately wanted to open discussion in the bunker about AIM's strategies but no one listened or took him seriously. The witness said Robinson got into a heated exchange with another person and was taken to a house by a security team. When Robinson arabbed a butcher knife from a table, security formed a full circle around him, according to the witness.











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Philadelphia couple sent to prison for prayer death

MARYCLAIRE DALE **Associated Press** PHILADELPHIA (AP) — A

U.S. couple who believed in faith-healing were sentenced Wednesday to 3½ to seven years in prison in the death of a second child who never saw a doctor despite being stricken with pneumonia.

Herbert and Catherine Schaible defied a court order to get medical care for their children after their 2-year-old son, Kent, died in 2009. Instead, they tried to comfort and pray over 8-month-old Brandon last year as he, too, died of treatable pneumonia.

"My religious beliefs are that you should pray, and not have to use medicine. But because it is against the law, then whatever sentence you give me, I will accept," Catherine Schaible, 44, told the judge. She added that her beliefs have since changed.

The Schaibles are thirdgeneration members of an insular Pentecostal community, the First Century Gospel Church in northeast Philadelphia, where they also taught at the church school. They have seven surviving children.

Judge Benjamin Lerner rejected defense claims that their religious beliefs "clashed" with the 2011 court order to get annual checkups and call a doctor if a child became ill. The order came after a jury convicted them of involun-

tary manslaughter in Kent's death, and they were sentenced to 10 years of probation.

"April of 2013 wasn't Brandon's time to die," Lerner said, noting the violence committed throughout human history in the name of religion.

"You've killed two of your children. ... Not God. Not your church. Not religious devotion. You."

Experts say about a dozen U.S. children die in faithhealing cases each year.

The Schaibles are the rare couple to lose a second child that way. Their pastor, Nelson Clark, blamed Kent's death on a "spiritual lack" in the parents' lives, and insisted they would never seek medical care, even if another child was dying.

After the first death, As-

sistant District Attorney Joanne Pescatore and public defender Mythri the couple's beliefs were

so ingrained that their children remained at risk. They asked the earlier judge to Jayaraman agreed that have the family supervised by a Department of Hu-

man Services caseworker. Instead, the judge assigned them to probation officers, who are not trained to monitor children's welfare.



Catherine Schaible walks from the criminal justice center Wednesday, Feb. 19, 2014, in Philadelphia. Herbert and Catherine Schaible who believed in faith-healing were sentenced Wednesday to 3.5 to seven years in prison in the death of a second child who was sick but didn't see a doctor. Philadelphia Common Pleas Judge Benjamin Lerner told Herbert and Catherine Schaible that it wasn't 8-month-old Brandon's time to die.

(AP Photo/Matt Rourke)

Man charged in teen death says shot to scare

CHUCK BARTELS Associated Press LITTLE ROCK, Arkansas (AP)

 A man accused of fatally shooting a 15-year-old girl told investigators he fired his pistol because he wanted to scare a carload shot at the carload of teenof feenagers he believed vandalized his vehicle, police said Tuesday.

Police released an account of the shooting, which they said followed a series of pranks between groups of young people over the weekend. A police spokes-

man, Lt. Sidney Allen, said the man charged in the shooting is the father of a teenager who was targeted in the exchange of

Police said Willie Noble, 48, agers after he tound eggs, mayonnaise and toilet paper covering his car Friday night. He waited for the teens to return, then fired his gun, police said. Adrian Broadway died early Saturday morning from a gunshot wound to the head.

waited inside because he knew whoever vandalized his vehicle was going to come back. Mr. Noble stated that once they returned (about 45 minutes later), he senger seat, and later died fired his handgun to scare at a hospital. them," according to the statement released by police Tuesday.

In the news release, police noted that Noble did not call police before or after the shooting. The driver of the car, a mid-size sedan with seven teens in it, fled

"Mr. Noble stated that he to a convenience store where the vouths called police. Officers found the driver side of the car pocked with bullet holes. Adrian was in the front pas-

> Noble is charged with firstdegree murder, five counts of aggravated assault and committing a terroristic act. He's being held on \$1 million bond. Jail records didn't indicate a pending court date or whether he has an attorney.



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Mormon Church to expand development in Philadelphia

JON HURDLE © 2014 New York Times

PHILADELPHIA - Plans for expansion of a Mormon complex along two blocks of north-central Philadelphia are providing city officials with a hope of reconnecting those sections to the city's core business district of Center City.

The development on the 1600 block of Vine Street, which is the northern border of Philadelphia's downtown area, would consist of a 32-story tower containing 258 apartments, as well as 13 rental townhomes and the 24,000-square-foot meeting house where members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints would worship and hold community events.

Designed by Robert A.M. Stern Architects, the project is planned for the block next to a Mormon temple that is already under construction and due to be completed in 2016.

While the temple will be reserved for major religious ceremonies, in keeping with Mormon tradition, the new meeting house will include a chapel for regular services, meeting rooms and classrooms for community and recreational events, officials said in announcing the project Feb. 12.

Alan Greenberger, the city's deputy mayor for economic development, said the temple and the planned Mormon housing and retail complex - which would be built on a parking lot - occupy two "unspoken for" blocks between the business district and the northern section of the city.

He praised the church for taking a step that private

developers were less likely to tackle, that is, committing to such a project without more evidence of economic vitality in the surrounding neighborhood.

"Most developers are followers," Greenberger said. "Few are pioneers, and the Mormons are pioneers by religion."

Mormon church officials

ment.

By building the meeting house, the church will fulfill its own interest in extending the "sacred space" around the temple, blocking any competing developments whose nature might not be suitable nearest to the temple, said Michael Marchesci, senior real estate manager for

ric" would not be desirable in an adjacent space, Marchesci said.

Even while the temple is under construction, the church has taken steps to ensure that behavior on the site meets its standards. Workers are barred from smoking cigarettes or drinking coffee, in keeping with Mormon law, and



Violent crimes declined in first

half of 2013: FBI

figures, murders declined by 6.9 percent, aggravated assaults by 6.6 percent and robberies by 1.8 percent. The numbers are based on reports from 12,723 law enforcement agencies.

The number of reported rapes increased to 14,400, compared with 13,242 in the first six months of 2012. But FBI officials cautioned that those numbers were slightly misleading because the figures from 2013 were based on a broader definition of rape that the Justice Department adopted two years ago.

In 2012, the Justice Department changed its longstanding definition of rape, removing the word "forcible" and expanding the definition to include "penetration, no matter how slight" of any orifice "without the consent of the victim."

Smaller cities saw the largest falloff in violent crime. According to the bureau, the number of violent crimes fell by 9.2 percent in cities with fewer than 10,000 people. Nonmetropolitan counties had a 10.5 percent decrease in crime, compared with 3.6 percent for metropolitan counties.



In an architectural rendering, the design for a Mormon complex anchored by a 32-story apartment tower, planned for a run-down area north of downtown Philadelphia. City officials praised the Mormons' commitment for tackling redevelopment of an area private developers have shied away from.

(Robert A.M. Stern Architects via The New York Times)

have declined to specify the cost of their project. Greenberger estimated the church's investment at "many tens of millions" of dollars.

While the meeting house is exempt from taxes because it is a religious building, the church will pay taxes on the apartment building and town houses because they are commercial developments. But the buildings will be eligible for a 10-year tax abate-

the church's special projects department.

"The church is sensitive to what can be developed next to its temple and wanted to have something that would be very compatible with the sacred nature of it," Marchesci said in an interview. "The church would like to control to a certain degree its environs."

For example, a theater showing movies that were not of the "right moral fabsigns at site entrances ban "profanity or discourteous behavior."

The Mormon population of Greater Philadelphia, estimated at 25,000 to 28,000, already has 47 meeting houses, said Corinne Dougherty, a spokeswoman for the Philadelphia region of the church. The new meeting house will allow some church members to relocate their regular worship and community activities, she said.



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US Financial Front:

American housing construction down 16% in January

MARTIN CRUTSINGER **AP Economics Writer WASHINGTON (AP)** — U.S. home construction fell in January for a second month but the weakness in both months reflected severe winter weather in many parts of the country. The expectation is that growth boosts demand. For January, both singlefamily and apartment construction fell. Single-family building dropped 15.9 percent to a rate of 573,000 while apartment construction was down 16.3 percent to 307,000.

By region of the country,

construction shot up 61.9 percent in the Northeast after two months of declines but was down in every other region of the country. Construction fell 67.7 percent in the Midwest to a record low of 50,000 units at an annual rate. The records go back

to 1960. That big decline likely reflected the impact of severe weather in the Midwest in January. Construction was down 12.5 percent in the South and 17.4 percent in the West.

Economists said weather likely played a large role in the construction declines.

"Weather in December and January took its toll on housing and February may not see much improvement," said Jennifer Lee, senior economist at BMO Capital Markets. She predicted a rebound in construction when spring arrives. The expectation is that housing construction will rise for a fifth consecutive year, helped by further gains in employment and relatively low mortgage rates. Rates hit record lows in early 2013 but then they started rising as the Federal Reserve sent signals that it might begin to curtail its monthly bond purchases.

The Fed reduced those purchases in December and

January, trimming them by \$20 billion to \$65 billion per month. Analysts expect the Fed will keep reducing the bond purchases in similar \$10 billion moves at each meeting this year until eliminating the program in December.

U.S. homebuilders' confidence in the housing market declined sharply in February, a drop that was blamed on the severe weather battering much of the nation.

Storms and cold weather dampened builders' outlook for sales ahead of the spring home-selling season and could further slow the pace of home construc-

The National Association of Home Builders/Wells Fargo builder sentiment index released Tuesday slid to 46. That's down from January's reading of 56 and is the lowest level since May. Readings below 50 indicate that more builders view sales conditions as poor rather than good.



Paquale Cocca installs a new electrical box on a new home, in Pepper Pike, Ohio. The Commerce Department released negative housing starts data for January on Wednesday, Feb. 19, 2014. (AP Photo/Tony Dejak)

housing will deliver another year of solid gains, helped by an improving economy. Builders started work at a seasonally adjusted annual rate of 880,000, down 16 percent from December, the Commerce Department reported Wednesday. In December, construction had fallen 4.8 percent. The declines in both months were blamed largely on the weather.

Applications for building permits fell in January for a third month, dropping 5.4 percent to a rate of 937,000.

For all of 2013, housing construction rose 17.7 percent to 976,000 units, the best showing since 2007. Analysts expect further gains this year as stronger job

US producer prices rose slight 0.2% in January

C. S. RUGABER **AP Economics Writer WASHINGTON (AP)** — The cost of producing goods and services in the United States rose slightly in January, with higher food prices partly offset by cheaper

gas. Overall, inflation re-

mains mild.

The Labor Department said Wednesday that the producer price index, which tracks prices before they reach consumers, rose 0.2 percent in January. That followed a 0.1 percent increase in December and a flat reading in November. In the past year, producer prices have risen just 1.2 percent, below the Federal Reserve's preferred target rate.

Excluding the cost of food, energy and markups by wholesalers and retailers, so-called core prices ticked up just 0.1 percent. Producer prices remain "rather modest, a sign that underlying inflationary pressures are very modest," Annalisa Piazza, an analyst at Newedge Strategy, said in a note to clients. January's producer prices are the first to be compiled since the government revamped its index to make it more comprehensive. Producer prices now include services and construction. Before last month, the index tracked only goods.

That change has doubled the producer price index's coverage to include 75 percent of the economy. It is the government's first revamp of the index in 35 years.

Inflation has declined in the past two years, posing a challenge for Fed policymakers. During 2013, the producer price index rose just 1.1 percent after rising 1.4 percent in 2012. Both figures are far below the Fed's 2 percent target.

Businesses have struggled to raise prices because of a tight job market and meager wage growth. Consumers have found it hard to pay more or demand higher wages.

Low inflation has enabled the Fed to pursue extraordinary stimulus programs to try to boost economic growth.

The Fed is now trying to unwind some of that stimulus. It cut its monthly bond purchases to \$65 billion this month, from \$75 billion in January and \$85 billion last year. The bond purchases are intended to keep longterm interest rates low to encourage borrowing and spending.

But Fed policymakers have expressed concern about the persistence of low inflation. If inflation remains below its target, the Fed could extend its stimulus efforts.

A philanthropic swipe for Square with red reader

MICHAEL LIEDTKE Associated Press SAN FRANCISCO (AP) —

Financial services startup Square is trying to turn the swipe of a credit card into an act of generosity.

To pull it off, Square is unveiling a red credit card reader that will serve as a charitable alternative to the millions of white readers the San Francisco company has distributed since its inception five years ago. The Square readers plug into the headphone jack of smartphones and tablet computers so the devices can become electronic sales terminals, empowering more merchants to accept credit cards.

The new color unveiled Wednesday is part of an alliance with (RED), a nonprofit organization that has raised more than \$250 million to fight AIDS in Africa during the past eight years. Unlike the free white reader, Square is charging \$10 for each red reader. Sauare will collect its standard 2.75 percent processing fee on each red reader purchased, and donate the remaining \$9.73 from each sale to (RED).

Square hopes to raise \$250,000 for (RED) — a goal that requires the company to sell about 25,700 of the red readers. The red reader will be sold only in the U.S. Square also processes payments in Canada and Japan, but the company is sticking with its white reader in those countries.

The red readers have been programmed to spur even more giving. Every time a sale is processed through Sauare's red reader, the electronic receipt emailed to the customer will include a link offering the consumer a chance to donate to (RED), too. The receipts soliciting (RED) donations will be automatically delivered for as long a merchant chooses to use Square's red reader.

The device gives merchants a chance to "turn their transactions into an AIDS-fighting machine," said Deborah Dugan, CEO of (RED).

US Study:

More women, foreign-educated execs enter top ranks

ELIZABETH OLSON © 2014 New York Times

The face of corporate America is gradually being remade as women and professionals educated abroad enter into the top ranks of the largest corporations, according to a study in the latest Harvard Business Review.

And the career path to the top has also changed over the last 30 years, the research found. Fewer ex-

change from 1980, when none of the Fortune 100 companies had women in the corner office and is also up from 2001, when 11 percent of the top-ranking jobs were held by women. The article was based on research by Peter Cappelli, a professor of management at the University of Pennsylvania's Wharton School, and Monika Hamori, a professor of human resource management at IE

top 10 roles at each of the Fortune 100 companies in 1980 with those holding the same positions in 2001.

Lifetime employees dropped "across the board," with financial institutions like the American International Group, Bank of America and other companies more frequently hiring outsiders. The percentage of leaders who spent all or almost all of their careers at one

spent her 33-year career. However, she is unlike many of her female peers, who are more likely to work in financial services, health care, consumer products and retail. But she is reflective of how long it typically takes executives to climb the ranks.

The study found that it took on average 28 years for women to reach the top positions, which is slightly shorter than the average 29 years for men. Women were also promoted more quickly, on an average of every four years, compared with five years for

"We see a really big dropoff in the corporate promotion track after a few years in the ranks of women in middle management," Cappelli said. "It could be that women who survive are much more able, or that corporations are promoting them on purpose." Even so, he noted that 17 of the Fortune 100 companies had no women in top positions such as chief executive, chief operating officer or chief financial officer. Women in the 2011 group had been promoted rapidly, but only 5 percent of those examined made it to the highest-level positions, compared with 17 percent of the men.

The share of those with Ivy League undergraduate degrees held steady at about 10 percent since 2001. However, nearly onefourth of the executives with MBAs graduated from elite schools like Columbia or Harvard. The overall proportion of top executives with a graduate degree was 36 percent.

But "if the Ivy League confers 'gold collar' status," Cappelli concluded, "it appears to do so mainly through outside hiring."



In this January 2014 photo, a Bank of America sign is displayed in Philadelphia. The face of corporate America is gradually being remade, including at such US bellwether institutions as General Motors and Bank of America. (AP Photo/Matt Rourke)

ecutives are "lifers," employees who began their careers at the bottom and attained the top corporate levels. And leaders with undergraduate degrees from public universities are now in the majority.

Although senior executive ranks remain dominated by men, women now occupy nearly 18 percent of the top slots at Fortune 100 companies, according to the article, "Who's Got Those Top Jobs," which examined the career trajectories, education levels and diversity among the 1,000 top-tier executives in 2011. That is a notable

Business School in Madrid, and was done with the help of Rocio Bonet, assistant professor of human resource management, at Madrid's IE Business School. Men educated outside the United States hold about 11 percent of the top positions, a notable increase from the 2 percent in 1980. Over the last 30 years, more multinationals have opened a pipeline of managers from their overseas operations to take high-level roles. The study is a follow-up to a Harvard Business Review article from January 2005, which compared leaders in the

company dropped to less than one-third in 2011, from about half of the senior executives in 1980.

"What is striking is that the corporate model in 1980 was that all the companies had lifetime employees and they promoted from within," Cappelli said "Now, the idea of a corporate career is no longer a standardized concept."

Career employees remained more common at the 20 most established corporations, like General Motors, where Mary Barra, who headed its global product development and is now chief executive, has

Prosecutors file new subpoenas over US coal ash

MICHAEL BIESECKER Associated Press RALEIGH, North Carolina (AP) — U.S. prosecutors have served North Carolina's environmental agency with 20 more subpoenas seeking documents and orderina 19 state employees to testify before a arand jury, part of

a broadening criminal in-

vestigation into a massive Energy or its employees. On er subpoenas issued on Feb. coal ash spill. The subpoenas made public by the N.C. Department of Environment and Natural Resources on Wednesday also ordered state officials to hand over any records pertaining to investments, cash or other items of value they might have received from Duke

Feb. 2, a pipe running under a coal ash pond collapsed at Duke's Dan River Steam Station, spilling up to 82,000 tons of coal ash mixed with 27 million gallons (102.2 million liters) of contaminated water. The new subpoenas were dated Feb. 11 and Tuesday. They follow two oth-

10, the day after a story by The Associated Press raised auestions about a proposed deal between state officials and Duke that would have fined America's largest electricity provider \$99,111 to settle violations over toxic groundwater contamination at two facilities.

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Beirut suicide blasts cause panic, bitterness

DIAA HADID Associated Press

BEIRUT (AP) — Two suicide bombers blew up their cars near an Iranian cultural center in Beirut on Wednesday, killing at least four people and wounding scores, including children in an orphanage, in the latest attack targeting Shiite areas in Lebanon.

An al-Qaida-linked group claimed responsibility for the bombings, saying they were retaliation for Hezbollah's involvement in the Syrian war alongside President Bashar Assad's forces. The Shiite militant organization is backed by Iran.

But the attack — like a dozen other similar bombings since July against Shiite areas of Lebanon — killed and wounded civilians. They included a dozen boys and girls living in a home for abandoned and orphaned children, said Dr. Hussam Bitar, a surgeon at Al-Zahraa hospital, where the youngsters were treat-

and angered residents, with the blood of one of from a smashed building who say they are facing an unknown enemy seeking to kill them because of their faith.

"You can't imagine this from somebody you live the orphaned airls who suffered shrapnel injuries. "She couldn't even remember her name. Did the bomber think of that orphanage?" he asked.



A wounded Lebanese man is carried from the site of an explosion, in the suburb of Beir Hassan, Beirut, Lebanon, Wednesday Feb. 19, 2014. A blast in a Shiite district in southern Beirut killed several people on Wednesday, security officials said — the latest apparent attack linked to the civil war in neighboring Syria that has killed and wounded scores of people over the last few

(AP Photo/Hussein Malla)

with, somebody who could be your neighbor," Bitar said.

The blasts have embittered Bitar's pants were stained ings. Mangled metal hung

The blast set cars and trees ablaze and shattered the windows of nearby buildthat once held a pharmacy, a clothing shop and a well-known sweet shop, Gondoline. Blood and tattered clothes lay on the ground amid the charred remains of six cars.

"I thought it was an earthquake," said Sam Hasna, a Lebanese-Canadian citizen and owner of the Gondoline. "Everything was on fire. The whole store had crashed down. I saw shattered people, shattered cars, and I collapsed."

Hasna later discovered one employee was killed and another was in critical condition.

"I am trying to reserve the first ticket back to Canada," said Hasna, who spent years building a life in Lebanon. "We tried, we tried, we tried."

The bombings are causing panic, Bitar said. The Al-Zahra hospital recently tightened security, posting guards with assault rifles. He said jumpy guards nearly killed two men after the blast, fearing they were

more suicide bombers.

In the hospital, Mariam Atweh, 21, watched over her husband Abdullah, 31, whose arm was mangled by shrapnel.

"They say they are Muslims, like us. But they treat us like the enemy. What are they doing?" she asked.

Nearby lay Hussein Hazouri, an 18-year-old university student with head wounds. "They say they are targeting one group (Hezbollah)," he said, "but they are targeting everybody."

The Lebanese army said the bombers drove vehicles packed with explosives and mortar shells to maximize the damage.

The explosions seriously damaged the white facade of Iran's cultural center, despite blast walls recently erected around the building. The state-run Lebanese news agency quoted the Iranian Embassy as saying no diplomats or workers were wounded. But one wounded man in the hospital said he was an Iranian Embassy worker.

UAE holds 12 after possible airborne arson attempt

ADAM SCHRECK Associated Press

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates (AP) — A suspected arsonist managed to light multiple fires that set off smoke alarms onboard an Etihad Airways flight from Australia to the United Arab Emirates, including some after the plane was diverted and passengers were searched in Indonesia, witnesses said Wednesday.

Emirati authorities have detained 12 passengers as part of an investigation into the fires, though no formal arrests have been made, according to the Middle Eastern carrier.

"A comprehensive inves-

tigation into the incidents at first that it was the inonboard ... is still underway," it said in an emailed statement. "The aircraft was searched and released shortly after arrival at Abu Dhabi when it was confirmed it was safe to do so." Passengers who were on the Boeing 777-300ER jetliner told The Associated Press that it appeared that someone on the flight set as many as five separate fires in different toilets over the course of the journey from Melbourne to the Emirati capital Abu Dhabi the previous day.

They described smelling smoke a couple of hours into the flight but thinking

flight meals being heated up or someone smoking illicitly in the lavatory.

Sarah Jeffery, a 37-year-old midwife from England, was sleeping in the back of the plane when an alarm startled her awake.

"Everything was dark and then the cabin crew all came running," she said. "As they opened the toilet door, I saw flames coming out of the bin in the toilet. But they quickly extinauished it. They were very good," she said.

Etihad said 254 passengers and crew were onboard when smoke was detected in two toilets, prompting the initial diversion to Indonesia.

Once on the ground, the plane, passengers and carry-on luggage were searched, and passenger movement was restricted on the captain's orders, according to the carrier.

Caroline Martens, 27, a was scary," she said.

professional golfer from Norway who was seated in the middle of the plane, said lighters and matches were confiscated in Jakarta before passengers were let back on the flight.

"The fact that they let everyone board again, that



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Iran pressures its negotiators at nuclear talks

GEORGE JAHN Associated Press

VIENNA (AP) — As Iran negotiated about a nuclear pact Tuesday, the country's top leader ordered his government to take precautionary steps in case the talks fail and the head of

ties faced by Iranian negotiators on the talks' second

They are bargaining with six world powers for a full end to sanctions while trying to salvage their country's nuclear program.

fari, reflected the difficul- pressure to agree to concessions that would scrap sanctions that have not already been partially lifted. Unless Tehran is prepared to see the talks fail, it will be forced into some compromises. But with the second round of the Vienna nego-

He advised it to create an would not buckle to pres-"economy of resistance" to counter the sanctions.

That would involve diversifying Iran's exports, reducing its dependence on sales of raw materials, and promoting knowledge-based hightech industries.

sure from the U.S. and five other world powers to scrap any of its nuclear facilities. The talks are designed to build on a first-step deal that came into effect last month and commits Iran to initial curbs on its nuclear program in return for some easing of sanctions. The deal can be extended, if both sides agree to do so after six months.

The United States, Russia, China, Britain, France and Germany seek an agreement that will leave Iran with little capacity to quickly ramp up its nuclear program into weapons-making mode with enriched uranium or plutonium, which can be used for the fissile core of a missile.

For that, they say Iran needs to dismantle or store most of its 20,000 uranium enriching centrifuges, including some of those not yet working. The six powers also demand that an Iranian reactor being built be either scrapped or converted from a heavy-water setup to a light-water facility that makes less plutonium.

Top EU foreign envoy Catherine Ashton — who is convening the Vienna talks — is scheduled to attend an EU foreign ministers' meeting in Brussels on Thursday.

That means the current round of talks, which began Tuesday, are likely to end early on Thursday.



Michael Mann, spokesperson for EU foreign policy chief Catherine Ashton speaks to the media in Vienna, Austria, Wednesday, Feb. 19, 2014. Iran and six world powers are back at the negotiating table eager to come to terms on a comprehensive nuclear deal but deeply divided on what it should look like. The two sides began meeting Tuesday in attempts to build on a first-step accord that temporarily curbs Tehran's nuclear activities in exchange for some sanctions relief.

(AP Photo/Ronald Zak)

the Revolutionary Guards warned the Iranian negotiators against concessions that could tarnish the nation's pride.

The comments by Ayatollah Ali Khamenei and the commander of the Guards. Gen. Mohammad Ali JaThe six countries want a deal that shrinks the Islamic Republic's nuclear program to a point that minimizes its ability to be turned toward making a nuclear weapons. Iran says it does not want such arms, but is under harsh economic tiations just getting underway, top Iranian officials were pushing their negotiators to be demanding.

Two days after saying he thought the talks would fail, Khamenei on Wednesday ordered his government to brace for such a scenario. Jafari, the commander of the Guards, warned Iranian negotiators to preserve "red lines of the establishment ... so that the national pride is not damaged."

On Tuesday, Iran Deputy Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi said his country

North Korea arrests Christian missionary from Australia **GERRY MULLANY** had been translated into with North Korean officials

© 2014 New York Times **HONG KONG** - North Korea has arrested a Christian missionary from Australia, his family said Wednesday, taking him into captivity even as it continues to face pressure to release an American missionary it has held for more than a year. The Australian, John Short, 75, was arrested in the capital, Pyongyang, on Sunday, according to his wife, Karen. She said the trip was her husband's second to the Communist dictatorship. He was in possession of religious materials that

Korean, according to a statement by his family.

John Short's detention comes more than a year after North Korea arrested Kenneth Bae, an American missionary, after he entered the country from China. Bae was eventually sentenced to 15 years of hard labor for committing "hostile acts" against the North, and Pyongyang has repeatedly resisted strong U.S. pressure seeking his release.

In an interview with Reuters, Karen Short said her husband had been open about his faith and even read his Bible in front of government guides during his first trip there.

"He won't be intimidated by the Communists," she

North Korea was faulted this week in a sharply critical U.N. report for, among other things, its intolerance of religious freedom. The report cited the North's practice of "extermination," murder, enslavement, torture, rape and persecution on grounds of race, religion and gender.

John Short has been re-

peatedly arrested in China after doing evangelical work there and "speaking out about brutality against Chinese Christians" in the country, according to a biography of him posted on a Christian website called Gospel Attract.

A native of Barmera in southern Australia, John Short came to Hong Kong in 1964, later focusing on missionary work with refugees from mainland China who had fled the Cultural Revolution. He raised three sons there with his wife, with whom he runs a Christian bookstore.

In an interview with That's Online, a website devoted to Chinese affairs, Karen Short said Australia's Department of Foreign Affairs told her that her husband's situation was "a different and difficult case." Australia does not have diplomatic relations with North Korea.

"We're Christians, we've been here for 40 years," she said of Hong Kong. "He's a front-line man - this is what he does. But North Korea is very different - that's why his heart was to go there. I'm asking people to pray for him."



Thailand court limiting force on protesters

THOMAS FULLER © 2014 New York Times

BANGKOK - Describing the movement to overthrow the Thai government as peaceful, a Banakok civil court Wednesday sharply curtailed the powers of the authorities and barred them from dispersing protesters, a decision that a prominent legal analyst described as "one step closer to a full-scale judicial coup."

The decision came one day after violent clashes between the police and protesters that left five people dead, including a police officer. After a series of confrontations in recent weeks and the wide circulation of photographs of heavily armed men among the protesters, the protest movement increasingly resembles an armed insurrection against the government of Prime Minister Yingluck Shinawa-

Samdin Lertbutr, a protest leader, said Wednesday on Thai television that "very professional" men with weapons were assisting protesters and "making the police retreat."

The court, however, found that the protests were being carried out "peacefully without weapons," and ordered that the demonstrators' rights and freedoms "be protected according to the constitution." The decision bars the government from using force or weapons to crack down on the demonstrators.

On Tuesday, protesters attacked the police with a grenade, an action that protest leaders initially denied but then acknowledged when footage of the detonation circulated on the Internet.

The protesters are seeking a suspension of democratic procedures and the creation of an unelected "people's council" that would replace the parliament. They resent the dominance of Yingluck, whose political movement has won every election since 2001.□

Hacking trial: Blair offered to advise Murdoch

JILL LAWLESS Associated Press

LONDON (AP) — Former British Prime Minister Tony Blair offered to work as an unofficial adviser to Rupert Murdoch as revelations of illegal phone hacking engulfed the mogul's media empire, according to an email made public Wednesday at the trial of several former Murdoch lieutenants. Prosecutor Andrew Edis read aloud an email sent by Rebekah Brooks, then chief executive of Murdoch's British newspapers, to Murdoch's son and deputy James on

July 11, 2011.

In it, Brooks said she had spent an hour on the phone with Blair, who had told her: "It will pass. Tough up." She said he told her to "keep strong and definitely (take) sleeping pills."

Brooks also wrote that Blair

"is available for you, KRM (Rupert Murdoch) and me as an unofficial adviser, but needs to be between us." She said Blair suggested Murdoch's company set up an external committee into phone hacking, which would "publish a Huttonstyle report." The 2004 Hut-

ton Report cleared Blair's government of wrongdoing over its handling of intelligence about Iraq's weapons of mass destruction. Blair was Britain's leader between 1997 and 2007, winning three consecutive elections. Since leaving office he has become a highly paid, globe-trotting consultant to corporations and governments, a public speaker and a Middle East envoy for the international Quartet.He remains dogged by criticism of his decision to take Britain into the 2003 U.S.-led war in Iraq.

Brooks, who was chief executive of Murdoch's News International when the hacking scandal erupted, was close to Blair and to the current prime minister, David Cameron.

Blair's office confirmed that the conversation with Brooks took place, but said Blair was "simply giving informal advice over the phone." In a statement, Blair's office said he had stressed to Brooks that "it was essential to have a fully transparent and independent process to get to the bottom of what had happened."

Italy's Renzi to present government by Saturday

D'EMILIO **FRANCES Associated Press**

ROME (AP) — Italian pre-Matteo mier-designate Renzi wrapped up talks Wednesday with both likely coalition partners and opposition leaders, promising to put together a new government by the end of the week. Renzi said he needed another day or so to develop his recipe for reviving the economy by encouraging hiring and reining in taxes. Also topping his agenda are reforms to overhaul an electoral system that has repeatedly yielded political paralysis. Earlier this week, Italy's president gave the Democratic Party leader the mandate to try to forge a viable coalition, and Renzi expressed confidence he would be able to report back on Saturday that he has succeeded. He told Monday to put his government up for required votes of confidence in both the

reporters he expected on of his party colleague Enrico Letta's government last week. Renzi is expected to have to rely on the same



Italian Premier-designate Matteo Renzi gestures during a press conference in Rome Wednesday, Feb. 19, 2014, after he wrapped up his talks with both likely coalition partners and opposition leaders, promising to put together by week's end a new government for the economically limping nation. (AP Photo/Roberto Monaldo)

lower Chamber of Deputies and the Senate. While serving as Florence mayor, Renzi engineered the fall coalition that proved shaky during much of Letta's 10 months in office.

Unable to count on a reli-

able majority in Parliament, Renzi courted former Premier Silvio Berlusconi and comic Beppe Grillo, who lead the two main opposition forces, in hopes of clinching their support on legislation. Berlusconi, who is kept out of office by a tax fraud conviction but still leads his center-right Forza Italia party, promised to keep his word to Renzi on back electoral reforms. In a meeting streamed live on Italian TV, Grillo told Renzi his anti-establishment 5 Star Movement would refuse to give Renzi any support. The Grillo camp is the third largest force in Parliament. Grillo, who cannot hold public office due to a manslaughter conviction, joked that the premier-designate had just met with "two convicts not in Parliament — me and Berlusconi."

man over Alpine killings French police arrest 2nd

JAMEY KEATEN **LAURENT CIPRIANI Associated Press** ANNECY, France (AP) —

French authorities discovered a weapons stash and detained a second man in the shooting deaths of a British-Iraqi man and three other people 18 months ago in the Alps, a state prosecutor said Wednesday. French police sweeps are continuing over the killings of Saad al-Hilli, his wife, an elderly relative and a French cyclist in a wooded area near bucolic Lake Annecy in September

2012, said prosecutor Eric Maillaud. "This case has not been solved," he told a news conference.

48-year-old security guard and former police officer was detained Tuesday, the first person apprehended in France over the killings. Police sweeps turned up vintage guns, a grenade and mortars in his home and that of a friend also detained for questioning, Maillaud said.

Authorities were now considering a separate probe into alleged weapons trafficking or sales linked to the

men, he said.

The prosecutor provided new details about the former officer - whom he declined to call a suspect - calling him a weapons collector who had once threated tourists and shown sporadic bouts of violence.

Unidentified neighbors had considered him a racist, he added. The men were not identified because no link between them and the killings had been established, Maillaud said. But he said one weapon in the ex-officer's stash

was made by Luger — the same manufacturer as the murder weapon, if not the same caliber or model, Maillaud said. Maillaud told The Associated Press late Wednesday that no DNA from the former policeman was found at the scene of the crime, though he remained in custody for questioning.

The al-Hilli couple's two daughters survived the shooting. In June, British police detained al-Hilli's brother, Zaid, for questioning and later freed him on bail.



Germany:

As car sales slide, industry bets on sharing

FRANK JORDANS Associated Press

BERLIN (AP) — Germans, once a nation of ardent automobile enthusiasts, are not buying cars as much as they used to. Instead, they're sharing them.

The country has become the world's biggest user of one-way car sharing plans, where people can find a vehicle using their smartphone, drive it across town

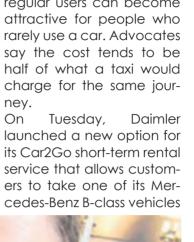
public transport, high fuel prices and a strong environmental movement mean that for many Germans the car has become an expendable accessory, or at worst an expensive liability.

fell below 3 million last year, continuing a two-decade decline. Meanwhile, the average age of buyers

"favorite child." Excellent were station-based. Vehicles could only be picked up in certain places and had to be returned to the same location. But six years ago car sharing took a different turn, with the launch of the first one-way offers.

These flexible services have New vehicle registrations spread to major cities across Europe and North America thanks to the adoption of smartphones, and have really taken off

costly extravagance for regular users can become





Marcus Spickermann, managing director of Daimler Mobility Services GmbH, demonstrates the smartphone app for the German automaker's car sharing service Car2Go in Berlin, Germany. Some German automakers are switching gears to take car sharing from city streets to the Autobahn, a maneuver that's being closely watched by others who wonder whether it could turn out to be a dead end for the industry. "We're responding to requests from our customers, who say they occasionally need a bigger car that they can take outside the city boundaries," said Spickermann.

(AP Photo/Frank Jordans)

and leave it there without rose above 52 for the first having to return it to a cen-

The trend has been boosted by Germany's powerful auto industry, which first ignored the car sharing phenomenon, but is now jumping on board. Some comthe idea, not just for short trips within cities, but also for longer ones between

It follows a culture shift in the country that invented the automobile, where cars were once commonly described as the Germans'

time, compared with an average age of 46 in the mid-1990s.

As a result, the auto industry has embraced car sharing as a means of reaching a younger generation for whom the idea of owning panies are betting big on a vehicle is as outdated as their parents' record collection.

"I want to pay for things when I use them," said Martin Blankenstein, a 35-yearold management consultant who uses several different car sharing companies. For decades such services

in Germany, where more than half of all the journeys were booked last year.

Using a mobile app, customers can find a nearby car, book it at short notice, drive it across town and leave it there without having to return to the starting point.

Billing is by the minute. Twenty minutes of use will typically cost 4-6 euros (\$5.50-\$8.20) with fuel, insurance and parking included. All-day rates range from 39-59 euros for most flexible car sharing services. What might seem like a

from Berlin to Hamburg, or vice versa, and leave it

The move marks a departure for Car2Go, which until now has only offered two-seater Smart cars for its 600,000 customers to zip around within 25 cities across Europe and North America.

Daimler is following in the tire tracks of DriveNow, a joint venture between its rival BMW and car rental firm SIXT, which began offering a similar service between Cologne and Duesseldorf last year.

Saudi Arabia, UK's **BAE** agree on new Typhoon jet price

AYA BATRAWY Associated Press DUBAI, United Arab Emirates (AP) — Europe's largest defense contractor BAE Systems announced Wednesday that the governments of the United Kingdom and Saudi Arabia have agreed on new pricing for the sale of 72 Eurofighter Typhoon jets.

The multi-billion dollar deal, signed in 2007 and widely reported by international media to stand at around \$7.5 billion, would be a huge boost of confidence and support for the Eurofighter Typhoon jets outside of Europe.

The Eurofighter, which has only been used in battle once during NATO's air campaign against Moammar Gadhafi in Libya's 2011 civil war, is aggressively trying to woo buyers away from the French Rafale fighter and American F-35s and F-16s.

BAE Systems failed to strike a deal with the United Arab Emirates, whose officials pulled out of talks to buy 60 Typhoon jets despite a visit to the Middle East by British Prime Minister David Cameron late last year to push for the sale.

The Middle East market remains largely dominated by Lockheed Martin's fighter jets. While the Typhoon deal marks an important sale for BAE Systems, it is modest compared with Saudi Arabia's \$60 billion deal in 2011 that included more than 80 F-15 fighter jets, missiles, radar warning systems and other equipment from the United

BAE Systems Chief Executive Ian King said the new pricing agreement was "an equitable outcome for all parties." BAE said payment from the deal was expected in the first-half of this year, but gave no further details.

Saudi Arabia and other Gulf countries are fortifying their military capabilities to counter a perceived threat from regional rivals, particularly Iran.



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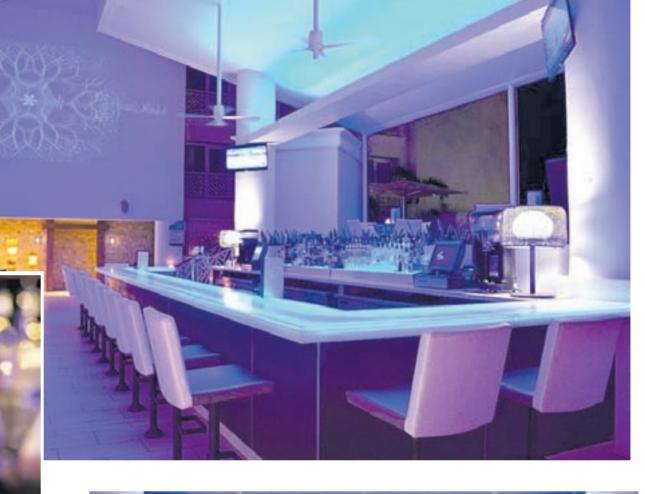
ORANJESTAD - It was recently that Renaissance Aruba Resort & Casino BLUE Bar received a nomination for the sexiest bar in the Caribbean by USA Travel Experience Caribbean. The international acknowledgement couldn't have come in a better time seeing that BLUE Bar has just finished remodeling. USA Today Travel Experience Caribbean, known for its extended list of travel recommendations as well as sharing of travel ex-

periences, recognized **BLUE** Bar as one of the sexiest bars in the Caribbean together with bars in Jamaica, Barbados, Anguilla, Thom-Nevis as, Sint and Maarten. **BLUE** located in the lobby of the Renaissance Marina Hotel is now bigger, very modern

and features new furniture. As the center of the social scene BLUE Bar offers daily Happy Hours from 4:30pm till 6:00pm where all customers foreign and locals can enjoy its delicious signature drink Blue Sky Martini or others such as the; Appletini,

Chocotini, Violet Martini, Moiito, classic cocktails with a special twist and the local treasures Balashi and Chill. As a perfect lunch or dinner option, BLUE Bar has Sushi, Burgers, Tapas and many more. When the sun sets the fun continues with great music on the Pool Deck with performances by great Di's from Thursday till Sunday.

Renaissance Aruba also known for its interactive experiences through RLife Live events which gives guests and visitors the opportunity to enjoy musical, culinary and artistic events at BLUE Bar and Marina pool deck. Renaissance Aruba Resort





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nation; it's the hard work nominations like these pos- Resort website: www.re-



Radisson Colleague of the Year:

Melania Wolff, recognized as top performer for 2013



PALM BEACH – The Radisson Aruba Resort Casino & Spa orchestrated an awards gala party just recently, inviting all its nominees to the Colleague of the Year award for an elegant banquet in the Grand Carib-

bean Ballroom.

As all nominees were introduced, they received a standing ovation and recognition from their peers. The winner, Melania Wolff, a member of the House-keeping department, was

presented among all nominees then singled out with an engraved plaque, flowers, and an all expenses paid vacation to a Radisson destination.

Melania, is one of the resort's best room attendants,







having won the Colleague of the Month award before. She was lauded for the quality of her work and for her infallible dedication to the resort and its guests. Pictured here the nominees: Jevenlyn Recio, Gregory Richardson, Carlos Ho, Juana Vasquez, Suzy Beaumont, Gabriel Reyes, Blanca Fajardo, Melissa Kock, Robert Di'Vecchia,

Steven Lynch and Jantje Tang with winner Melania Wolff, who is flanked by her son and General Manager Mark Lyttleton Frances.

The Human Resources team with Angelique, Eugenille, Mina, Carmen and Lisette meticulously prepared for the gala affair with personalized gifts and certificates presented to all finalists and winners. The banqueting staff and culinary brigade matched their efforts to orchestrate a flawless evening with excellent food and top entertainment, an acrobatic show by Ritmo Cubano. The entertainment by Latin Fever featured romantic, Valentine themed dinner music with vocalist Sashah Figueroa.



Kaweta and the Aruba Donkey Sanctuary need your help!

BRINGAMOSA - We would like to introduce Kaweta to you, one of the donkeys that has found a home at the Aruba Donkey Sanctuary. At four a.m. a call came in that a donkey had been hit by a car at Savaneta. The problem is that when the weather has been dry too long, the roaming donkeys go to the more populated areas on the island to find water. Fortunately Kaweta could be caught right away and he was taken to the vet, who ordered an emergency

operation. The result was 12 pins in the bone. Kaweta had to stay in the intensive care unit, hanging in a sling. And that was not all: because he had grated his head on the road, part of his nostril had disappeared. But fortunately Kaweta is doing okay now. There was a moment of panic when the poor donkey did not wake up from the anaesthetic, but after a while things did turn out well.

This beautiful donkey has been provided with a chip, just like all the other donkeys. On the chip is information about the donkey and its medical history. The donkeys at the sanctuary have a lot of friends with whom they can play all day long. And they love living there: they are well-cared for, they are fed and watered and when they are sick the vet is called. Yes, they are expensive customers for the sanctuary.

The volunteers are trying to cover the various costs with all kinds of activities and the sale of great donkey memorabilia in the shop. Fortunately, there are also visitors who wish to adopt a donkey, who buy something at the donkey shop or who make a donation. Thus they help support us. Everyone is welcome to visit the sanctuary, which has opening hours from 9 am until 4 pm and in the weekend from 10 am until 3. Entry is free of charge and one can enjoy a soft drink, a cup of coffee or a refreshing ice cream.

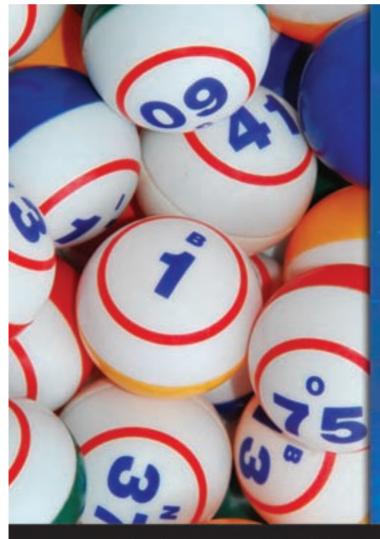
The volunteers of the sanctuary are hoping that



somebody will adopt this friendly, lovely donkey. Of course the donkey will keep on living at the sanctuary; you only need to pay AWG. 30,-- per month for the donkey's keep. With this amount you help support the sanctuary as well as your own donkey. And you will receive a beautiful certificate and a super T-shirt and your name and

photo will be posted on our website. So please call the sanctuary at 593-2933; you can also register via the website www.arubandonkey.org or donate money on bank account number 40.03.025 at the Aruba Bank! Just do it! Would you like to follow the donkeys on Facebook: surf to Donkey Sanctuary Aruba please.







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Ted Ligety wins GS for 2nd career Olympic gold

HOWARD FENDRICH AP Sports Writer KRASNAYA POLYANA, Russia (AP) — This was the race Ted Ligety knew he should win.

So did everybody else.

And that, Ligety explained Wednesday after becoming the first American man in Olympic history with two Alpine skiing gold medals, was precisely what made the feat so tough.

Sometimes, being a popular pick can be overwhelming. Ligety learned that four years ago, and dealt with the matter far better on this day.

Scraping the snow with his gloves and hips while taking wide turns around gates, his body swaying left and right with a pendulum's precision, Ligety finished the two-leg giant slalom with a combined time of 2 minutes, 45.29 seconds, winning by nearly a half-second.

Continued on Page 22



Men's giant slalom gold medalist Ted Ligety of the United States poses for photographers on the podium at the Sochi 2014 Winter Olympics, Wednesday, Feb. 19, 2014, in Krasnaya Polyana, Russia.

Venus Williams of the U.S. serves the ball to Ana Ivanovic of Serbia during the third day of Dubai Duty Free Tennis Championships in Dubai, United Arab Emirates, Wednesday, Feb. 19, 2014. **Associated Press**

SANDRA HARWITT Associated Press

(AP) — Venus Williams pummeled Ana Ivanovic 6-2, 6-1 in a second-round match between former world No. 1s at the Dubai Championships on Wednesday. Williams showed the form that once delivered her seven Grand Slam titles. Ivanovic

couldn't take advantage of the two break-point op-**DUBAI, United Arab Emirates** portunities Williams offered in the sixth game of the first set. "I'm just trying to play well every day, take one point at a time and learn from my mistakes every match, try to go out there relaxed with a clear mind," said Williams, who won back-to-back Dubai titles in

Venus beats Ivanovic in Dubai 2nd round

2009 and 2010.

A wild card entrant, Williams lost only seven total points in her other six service games as she moved to a 9-2 record against Ivanovic. However, the Serbian had won their last encounter in a three-set Auckland final last month. "We've played many times in the past," Ivanovic said. "I definitely think she was a lot more aggressive (than in Auckland). She was stepping in the court way more, coming to the net more often." In the quarterfinals, Williams will play Italian qualifier Flavia Pennetta, who upset secondseeded Agnieszka Radwanska 6-4, 6-1. "The conditions for me are tough,"

Radwanska said. "The ball was really flying. "When I don't feel the ball, it's not good." She led 4-1 then lost eight games in a row to be 6-4, 3-0 down. Radwanska, the 2012 Dubai champion, also was ousted in the second round at the Qatar Open in Doha last week. In another upset, third-seeded and defending champion Petra Kvitova of the Czech Republic joined Radwanska on the sidelines. Kvitova had a 6-1, 4-2 lead, but couldn't close the door on tenacious Spaniard Carla Suarez Navarro, who won their two hour, 16 minute battle 1-6, 6-4, 7-6 (4). "I start really well, I play pretty aggressively, I made a lot

of winners, and she didn't have really time to hit well as she did after," Kvitova said. "And when I was leading in the second set, I lost very badly my serve, and I think that from that moment I was like a little bit mentally down." Sorana Cirstea of Romania upset fourth-seeded Sara Errani of Italy 6-2, 5-7, 6-1, to land a quarterfinal berth against eighthseeded Caroline Wozniacki of Denmark. Wozniacki defeated Annika Beck of Germany 6-4, 6-4. Fifthseeded Jelena Jankovic of Serbia beat Lucie Safarova of the Czech Republic 7-5, 6-4 to earn a quarterfinal shot at top-seeded Serena



James scores 42, Heat pull away from Mavs 117-106

The Associated Press

DALLAS (AP) — LeBron James scored a seasonhigh 42 points and the Miami Heat tuned up for a showdown with Oklahoma City by beating the Dallas Mavericks 117-106 Tuesday night, since losing to them in the **NBA** Capsules

James, who had his first 40-point game of the season, scored the first eight points and 10 overall in a 14-0 run that put the Heat up 106-95 after they trailed by one entering the fourth quarter.

Miami came out of the All-Star break by winning for the sixth time in seven games heading into James' duel with Kevin Durant on Thursday night in Oklahoma City.

Dirk Nowitzki had 22 points to lead the Mavericks.

The deciding run started when James, who also had nine rebounds and six assists, stole a pass from Shawn Marion in the backcourt and pulled up for a tying 3-pointer.

After hitting another 3 over Marion to put Miami ahead for good, James drove for a dunk following a Dallas turnover. His previous seaover Dallas in Miami.

Dallas missed seven shots and had three turnovers while the Heat pulled away for their third straight season sweep of the Mavericks - six consecutive wins -2011 NBA Finals.

Chris Bosh scored 22 points for Miami and Dwyane Wade had 13 after missing the final two games before the break with a foot problem. Chris Andersen scored a season-high 18.

SPURS 113, CLIPPERS 103 LOS ANGELES (AP) — Patty Mills scored 16 of his 25 points in the fourth quarter, Tim Duncan had 19 points and 13 rebounds during a foul-plagued 38 minutes, and San Antonio charged out of the All-Star break with a victory over Los Angeles.

The Spurs played without six-time All-Star Tony Parker, whom coach Gregg Popovich said would be sidelined "for the foreseeable future" because of numerous aches and pains — including a bruised shin, a groin strain and lower back spasms.

The veteran point guard,

son high was 39 in a win who played 11 minutes in Sunday's All-Star game, is the Spurs' leading scorer and their only player averaging at least 30 minutes.

Blake Griffin had 35 points and 12 rebounds, Jamal Crawford scored 25 and DeAndre Jordan grabbed 18 rebounds for the Clippers. J.J. Redick missed his fifth straight game with a sore right hip.

Backup shooting guard Manu Ginobili returned to the Spurs' lineup and had nine points in 14 minutes after missing eight games because of tightness in his left hamstring.

PACERS 108, HAWKS 98 INDIANAPOLIS (AP) — Paul George scored 26 points, including four 3-pointers, to lead Indiana over Atlanta. David West had 17 points and Lance Stephenson added 13 to help the Pacers beat the Hawks for the second time in three meetings this season.

Kyle Korver scored 19 points, shooting 5 for 7 on 3-pointers, and Lou Williams added 18 points for the Hawks, who have lost six straight.

The Pacers went on a 12-2 run in the third quarter



Charlotte Bobcats forward Josh McRoberts (11) is fouled by Detroit Pistons center Andre Drummond during the second half of an NBA basketball game in Auburn Hills, Mich., Tuesday, Feb. 18, 2014. The Bobcats won 108-96,

Associated Press

on a basket by West, two 3-pointers by George and a dunk and layup by George Hill to give Indiana a 73-54 lead early in the third.

The Pacers put the game away when lan Mahinmi converted a three-point play and Danny Granger hit a 3 to take a 101-82

GRIZZLIES 98, KNICKS 93 MEMPHIS, Tenn. (AP) — Mike Conley scored 22 points in his return after missing seven games with an ankle injury, Mike Miller added a season-high 19 and Memphis weathered New York's second-half rally.

Miller shot 7 for 11 from the field, including 5 of 7 on 3-pointers, to help Memphis win its third straight. His 3 with 45.9 seconds remaining gave the Grizzlies the lead for good as they scored the game's final seven points.



New York Yankees outfielder Carlos Beltran walks in the outfield during spring training baseball practice, Monday, Feb. 17, 2014, in Tampa, Fla.

Associated Press

RONALD BLUM AP Sports Writer

TAMPA, Florida (AP) — Ichiro Suzuki watched as the New York Yankees added Jacoby Ellsbury and Carlos Beltran to an outfield that already included him, Brett Gardner and Alfonso Soriano, a backup who should see time at designated hit-

What did he think? Suzuki gave his reply in Japanese, and his interpreter started to translate.

"Obviously I don't get frustrated or angry," the interpreter said. "My reaction was kind — "

And then Suzuki leaned forward and interrupted.

Ichiro Suzuki on crowded Yankees' outfield: 'Oops'

"Oops," he said in English, smiling.

"That's the reaction," the interpreter said.

The 40-year-old outfielder arrived from Japan after spending nine seasons with the Pacific League's Orix Blue Wave, and he won the American League batting title, rookie of the year and MVP awards in 2001. He became a 10-time MLB All-Star and won a second batting crown in 2004, when his 262 hits broke the season record George Sisler set 84 years earlier.

He had a record 10 straight seasons with 200 or more hits, but as his skills eroded, the Seattle Mariners dealt him to the Yankees in July 2012. He has a chance to reach 3,000 hits — he enters the season with 2,742, but he might not get a lot of at-bats in New York.

"I do have goals and dreams about certain things, but when you get into the late 30s, you just have to take it year by year," he said. "At this point right now, that's something that I'm not thinking about. Obviously, if it gets closer, if it's something that I could reach and get, you probably start thinking about it." His bat revived when he first joined the Yankees — Suzuki hit .322 and earned a \$13 million, two-year con-

tract that pays him \$6.5 million this season. But he batted just .262 with a .297 on-base percentage last season, part of a Yankees' lineup that fizzled much of the time.

Following the team's retooling, he might be better off if he's traded. But he doesn't want to think about that possibility too much just yet.

"Obviously with the additions, I'm going to have to find a place for myself," he said. "My job up to this point was to come here healthy, in good shape, and that's what I did. And so I'm here, and we'll see where it goes."



Sampras: Federer can win another major title

SAMUEL PETREQUIN AP Sports Writer

LONDON (AP) — Roger Federer could play for another four years and add to his tally of 17 Grand Slam titles, according to former No. 1 Pete Sampras.

Speaking ahead of an exhibition match against Andre Agassi in London on March 3, Sampras said on a conference call Wednesday that he is impressed by Federer's longevity.

"I'm amazed that he is up for more tennis," Sampras said. "He has done everything in the game and he could walk away tomorrow feeling great about it. But he still wants to travel and compete and I'm in awe of it. He is a true lover of the sport."

Following a disappointing 2013 season marred by back problems, Federer started this year on a high. Now working with new coach Stefan Edberg, he

reached the final of his first tournament, at Brisbane, and then made the semifinals of the Australian Open for the 11th consecutive year.

His run at Melbourne included wins over 2008 finalist Jo-Wilfried Tsonga and Wimbledon champion Andv Murray.

Sampras, who retired after winning his 14th Grand Slam title at the 2002 U.S. Open, said Federer should be comforted by a streak that finally ended with a defeat to Rafael Nadal.

"I thought his level was quite good," Sampras said. "When you're playing against Rafa and if you're not quite on your game then it can seem like you're struggling. Rafa is a rock. But I do see Roger building from that, I think he's going to do well this year."

Asked if Federer could win another Grand Slam title, Sampras said the Swiss "can do it" if he plays his



In this Monday, Feb. 28, 2011 file photo, Pete Sampras reacts after losing a point to Andre Agassi in an exhibition tennis match at Madison Square Garden in New York.

Associated Press

best tennis.

"That's why he's playing, I don't think he's playing for anything else but to win some more majors," said Sampras, adding that Federer's best chance would hinted he could keep play-

be on his favorite grass surface, at Wimbledon.

Sampras was 31 when he decided to hang up his racket for good, while the 32-year-old Federer has ing until the Rio Olympics in

"As long as Roger is enjoying it and he's healthy, I can see him playing for another two, three, four more years," Sampras said.

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Nadal is cautious in return following back injury



Rafael Nadal of Spain gestures during his game with Daniel Gimeno-Traver of Spain at the Rio Open tennis tournament in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, Tuesday, Feb. 18, 2014. Associated Press

STEPHEN WADE AP Sports Writer

RIO DE JANEIRO (AP) — Rafael Nadal is taking it easy at the Rio Open, nursing a back injury and hoping it gets better.

No. 1-ranked Nadal defeated fellow Spaniard Daniel Gimeno-Traver in his first-round match on Tuesday night, his first in more than three weeks after losing the Australian Open fi-

nal to Stanislaw Wawrinka. Nadal was an overwhelming favorite in Australia to win his 14th Grand Slam title, but he picked up the back strain warming up and was never the same.

"When one comes back from an injury in a short period of time, you can always feel a need to be cautious," he said. "I felt it (the back) a bit. But I hope things continue to improve day by day. Little by little the back will be strong again. I'll get used to the competition and the back won't keep me from playing future tournaments." The Spaniard's next test is

The Spaniard's next test is on Thursday against countryman Albert Montanes.

"I had a problem from Australia," Nadal said. "I tried to work on it at home and I'm back playing again. At the beginning one is a bit

afraid coming back from a problem. I've worked hard to try to come back."

Nadal was sidelined for much of the 2012 season with a left knee injury. He used the Latin American clay-court circuit as his testing ground for the knee early in 2013.

It went OK. He won the French and US Open.

He's at it again early in 2014 with his back, reminding some that Nadal's big

swings and aggressive play may be taking a toll on his 27-year-old body.

Nadal said after Tuesday's match — his 800th — that he'd played better than he'd practiced.

"Of course there are aspects of the game I have to improve," he said. "It's been a long time since I've played on the surface (clay), so It's normal to return without the best feeling."



FEBRUARY 20 - 26



KEVIN HART | REGINA HALL COLIN FARRELL | JESSICA BROWN FINDLAY about WINTER'S last night MON - THURS 4:40 | 7:00 | 9:20 FRI 4:40 | 7:00 | 9:20 | 11:45 SAT 2:20 | 4:40 | 7:00 | 9:20 | 11:45 SUN & HOL. 2:20 | 4:40 | 7:00 | 9:20 PG-13 MON - FRI 4:40 SAT 2:05 | 4:40 SUN & HOL. 2:05 | 4:40 GABRIELLA WILDE | ALEX PETTYFER **ENDLESS** LOVE MON - FRI 4:00 | 6:00 SAT 3:30 | 6:00 SUN & HOL. 3:30 | 6:00 AARON ECKHART | YVONNE STRAHOVSKI I,FRANKENSTEIN WITH DUTCH SUBTITLES MON - THURS 7:15 | 9:25 FRI 7:15 | 9:25 | 11:35 SAT 7:15 | 9:25 | 11:35 SUN & HOL. 7:15 | 9:25

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Tsonga and Gasquet reach Open 13 quarters

MARSEILLE, France (AP)

— Top-seeded Richard
Gasquet and defending champion Jo-Wilfried
Tsonga both reached
the Open 13 quarterfinals
with straight-sets wins on
Wednesday.

After the second-seeded Tsonga beat Nikolay Davydenko 7-6 (4), 7-6 (8), his French countryman Gasquet followed up with a 6-3, 6-3 win against Slovenia's Blaz Kavcic. Gasquet did not face a single break-point and took his opponent's serve three times.

Earlier, the second-seeded Tsonga, who had 19 aces, improved to 4-2 in career head-to-heads against the Russian who reached a career-high ranking of third. Davydenko saved one match point with a

forehand pass down the line, but Tsonga clinched victory with the next when Davydenko's forehand hit the net.

"It's never easy against him, he's a great player who's won a lot of titles," the 28-year-old Tsonga said. "I'm trying to get my bearings again, which is why I was so happy to win."

Tsonga next plays either sixth-seeded Edouard Roger-Vasselin of France or Ukraine's Sergiy Stakhovsky, while Gasquet's quarterfinal opponent is either fifth-seeded Ivan Dodig of Croatia or Germany's Tobias Kamke.

"I didn't play well last time (in Rotterdam). But you shouldn't forget that, and use the experience," said Tsonga, referring to his straight-sets loss to Croat Marin Cilic in the second round of the ABN Amro tournament. "I absolutely must raise my level."

In the remaining first-round matches on Wednesday, there were wins for seventh-seeded Julien Benneteau of France, No. 8 Nicolas Mahut of France, Spain's Roberto Bautista Agut, Germany's Jan-Lennard Struff, Frenchman Michael Llodra and Ricardas Berankis of Lithuania.

Benneteau of France won 6-1, 6-4 against Jesse Huta Galung; Mahut beat Kenny De Schepper 7-6 (2), 6-3; Struff beat David Guez 3-6, 6-1, 6-1; Bautista Agut won 7-5, 4-6, 6-3 against Dustin Brown; Llodra downed Lukas Lacko 6-3, 7-6 (2), and Berankis led 6-5 when Jan Hajek retired. □



Russia loses shot at Olympic hockey gold

Associated Press

SOCHI, Russia (AP) — A Russian hockey team with immense expectations lost its shot at an Olympic title Wednesday at a Winter Games tempered by violence both in the host city and in nearby Ukraine.

Finland beat the Russians 3-1, knocking them out of the quarterfinals and ending their chances of winning a hockey gold medal in front of their own fans.

Defending Olympic champion Canada had a scare from upstart Latvia before a late goal sealed a 2-1 win. The U.S. advanced easily with a 5-2 win over the Czech Republic. The U.S. will meet Canada and Sweden will take on Finland in Friday's semifinals.

Another Russian with areat expectations, 15-year-old figure skater Julia Lipnitskaia, fell during the women's short program and finished fifth. Defending gold medalist Yuna Kim of South Korea led the competition, which finishes Thursday.

Ted Ligety of the U.S. won gold in men's giant slalom, the first American man to win two Olympic medals in Alpine skiing. American-turned Russian snowboarder Vic Wild won the men's parallel giant slalom, minutes after his Rus-



Russia forward Yevgeni Malkin lies on the ice in the closing minutes of the third period in men's quarterfinal hockey game against Finland at Bolshoy Arena at the 2014 Winter Olympics, Wednesday, Feb. 19, 2014, in Sochi, Russia. Finland defeated Russia 3-1. **Associated Press**

sian wife, Alexa Zavarzina, won bronze in the women's competition. In downtown Sochi, Cossack militia attacked the Pussy Riot punk group with horsewhips and removed members' trademark ski masks. The confrontation lasted less than three minutes and no one was arrested. Earlier, Sergei Bubka, the pole vault great who heads the Ukrainian Olympic Committee, urged both sides in Ukraine's political crisis to halt the violence that left at least 25 people dead and 240 injured in

Kiev on Tuesday. The crisis centers on divided loyalties in Ukraine between Russia and the West.

"I'm shocked by what is happening in my native country — especially because the violence is taking place during the Olympic Games, the world's most peaceful and democratic event," Bubka said.

On Day 13 of the Sochi Olympics, Norway won the first Olympic mixed relay in biathlon, making Ole Einar Bjoerndalen the most decorated Winter Olympian ever

with 13 medals; Norway also won the women's crosscountry team sprint, with Finland taking the men's title; Martina Sablikova of the Czech Republic denied the Netherlands another speedskating podium sweep; and the Canadian women won the gold in bobsled.

ICE HOCKEY: Finland's win over Russia was not an upset. The Finns had advanced to the semifinals as the fourth seed, while Russia had to win a consolation round game to advance to the final eight. Sweden continued its undefeated run. beating Slovenia 5-0 to advance to the semifinals.

FIGURE SKATING: Kim scored 74.92 points, ahead of Adelina Sotnikova of Russia by 0.28. Carolina Kostner of Italy is third with 74.12. Lipnitskaia, who helped Russia win the team gold on Feb. 9, fell on a triple flip. She was too tearful to speak after her worst performance in months. American champion Gracie Gold was fourth.

CROSS-COUNTRY: Marit Bjoergen captured her fifth career Olympic gold medal when Norway won the women's team sprint. Ingvild Flugstad Oestberg was the other Norwegian skier. Finland took silver and Sweden bronze. In the men's race, Finland took advantage of a fall that slowed its two closest rivals. Russia grabbed the silver, Sweden the bronze.

SNOWBOARDING: grew up in White Salmon, Wash., and applied for Russian citizenship after marrying Zavarzina in 2011. He then joined the Russian snowboarding team. Nevin Galmarini of Switzerland finished second for silver, and Zan Kosir of Slovenia took the bronze.

LIGETY

Continued from Page 18

His gold is the first for the U.S. Alpine team at the Sochi Games. Yet Ligety's overriding emotion as he fell to the ground in the finish area was something other than pure joy.

"It was a huge relief," said Ligety, a 29-year-old based in Park City, Utah. "All season long, everybody talks about the Olympics, Olympics, Olympics. At a certain point, I was just like, 'Let's do it already. Let's get this thing over with, so we can stop talking about the pressure and everything with it.' So it's awesome to ... finally do it and get the monkey off the back."

He used a perfect first run to open a wide lead of nearly a second, then protected that with a conservative second run that was only 14th-fastest down the

through sparse clouds. All in all, much more comfortable conditions than the fog, rain and sleet of a day



United States' Bode Miller arrives in the finish area after the first run of the men's giant slalom at the Sochi 2014 Winter Olympics, Wednesday, Feb. 19, 2014, in Krasnaya Polyana, Russia.

Rosa Khutor course as the sun peeked out from behind a nearby peak and free. He trusted himself. It

earlier.

"His first run was flawless,

was his signature skiing," U.S. men's head coach Sasha Rearick said. "The second run was a strategic chess match, which he executed brilliantly."

France earned its first Alpine medals of the Sochi Olympics, with Steve Missilier producing the day's top second leg to earn silver, 0.48 seconds behind Ligety. Alexis Pinturault got the bronze, another 0.16 back. Overall World Cup leader Marcel Hirscher of Austria was fourth, while Bode Miller was 20th in what was his last race of the Sochi Games — and, given that he'll be 40 in 2018, probably of his Olympic career.

Miller, who has won a U.S.record six Alpine medals, said other racers try to copy Ligety's revolutionary style in the giant slalom,

but "he's so much better at it than everybody else." Ligety maintains momentum by fluidly linking his turns, one into the next, actually taking a longer path down the slope by steering so far from each gate. Opponents cut much closer to gates, but then lose valuable hundredths of a second each time they jerk their bodies in a different direction.

"He carries so much speed and doesn't make mistakes. Those are the things that separate him," Miller explained. "Other guys carry speed for a couple of turns and struggle a bit. He just carries it smooth from top to bottom."

Asked whether Ligety could have been beaten, Missiller replied: "It is impossible. For me and, I think, for all racers."

Visa, MasterCard offer more phone payment options

ANICK JESDANUN AP Technology Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Visa and MasterCard are introducing Internet-based technologies to make it easier for shoppers to buy things at retail stores without pulling out a credit card.

The two technologies, announced separately on Wednesday, will give merchants and banks more options for incorporating so-called contact-less payment systems into their mobile apps. The customer uses the app to make purchases by tapping the phone to a store's card reader.

The technologies tap a new feature in Google's Android operating system. Before, card information had to be stored on a secured part of the phone. Now, it can be stored remotely instead. A retail or banking app on the phone then retrieves what's needed to complete the trans-

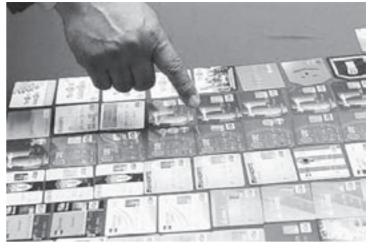
Visa said it will provide app developers with a complete service, with card information stored on Visa's

MasterCard said it will publish technical details by the end of June to help companies use the new Android feature, known as Host Card Emulation. MasterCard said it has been testing the technology with two major banks, Capital One in the U.S. and Banco Sabadell in Europe.

"The use of HCE provides a very attractive way forward to launch an increased number of NFC-based offerings," said James Anderson, MasterCard's group head for emerging payments, said in a statement. Visa and MasterCard are both targeting phones that have a wireless technology called near-field communication. Many Android phones have that, and the remote storage capabilities come with the Kit Kat version of Android, which was released last fall. Apple's iPhones lack NFC, but cases are available to enable that technology.

Visa said it will make tools available for app developers to incorporate payment capabilities. The customer can then use a smartphone instead of a plastic credit card at stores, transit systems and other places that accept contact-less payments.

The hope is to encourage greater use of contact-less payments, which experts say offer more security protections than plastic. The card number is stored in encrypted form and can be easily disabled remotely if a phone is lost or stolen. Mobile systems also permit easier use of one-time card numbers, which won't work for additional transactions



McAllen Police Chief Victor Rodriguez points at dozens of fraudulent credit cards that were confiscated by McAllen police after arresting a man and a woman on fraud charges tied to the December Target credit card breach, Monday Jan. 20, 2014 at the McAllen Police Department in McAllen, Texas.

Associated Press

and are useless should a merchant's computers get hacked.

Sam Shrauger, Visa's senior vice president for digital services in developed markets, said having payment information on remote servers is cheaper and easier to operate than using the phone's hardware.

With hardware-based systems, he said, services need to make deals with wireless carriers and device makers. Although he didn't cite examples, many U.S. carriers had blocked or made it difficult to get Google's NFC-based Wallet app, for instance, as they were developing a competing system, Isis.

Visa and MasterCard made the announcements ahead of the Mobile World Congress wireless trade show, which takes place in Barcelona, Spain, next

FCC won't appeal ruling on Internet neutrality

MARCY GORDON AP Business Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Federal Communications Commission says it won't appeal a court decision that struck down rules it designed to ensure that the transmission of all Internet content be treated equally. The agency says it will fashion new rules.

The chairman of the FCC announced Wednesday that the agency will rewrite the anti-discrimination and anti-blocking rules following the ruling by a federal appeals court last month. The ruling said the FCC has the authority to regulate broadband providers' treatment of Internet traffic but the agency failed to establish that its regulations don't overreach.

The court's decision could affect the prices consumers pay to access entertainment, news and other online content.

FCC chairman Tom Wheeler said in a statement the



Members of global advocacy group Avaaz stand next to a digital counter showing the number of petition signatures calling for net neutrality outside the Federal Communication Commission in Washington, Thursday, Jan. 30, 2014.

agency will propose new rules to meet the court's requirements.

The FCC's "net neutrality" rules barred broadband providers from prioritizing some types of Internet traffic over others. The directives aligned with the free of commercial barriers.

Obama administration's goal of Internet openness. President Barack Obama has said that "net neutralitv" is an issue he cares deeply about, partly because his campaign was powered by an Internet Proponents of net neutrality maintain it ensures a level playing field for big and small companies. They believe it protects consumers and competition, and fosters innovation.

Associated Press

Wheeler said that in writing the new rules, the FCC "will

look for opportunities to enhance Internet access competition."

Comcast Corp., one of the biggest cable TV companies, praised Wheeler's decision. The FCC chairman "has taken a thoughtful approach which creates a path for enforceable rules," Sena Fitzmaurice, Comcast's vice president for government affairs, said in a statement.

In its ruling, the three-judge panel of the appeals court acknowledged concerns that if it overturned the FCC rules, some broadband companies might act to undermine competition.

"For example, a broadband provider like Comcast might limit its end-user subscribers' ability to access the New York Times website if it wanted to spike traffic to its own news website, or it might degrade the quality of the connection to a search website like Bing if a competitor like Google paid for prioritized access," the court said.



Stocks slip as Fed talk spooks investors

KEN SWEET AP Markets Writer NEW YORK (AP) — Stocks fell Wednesday as investors were left uneasy by news that Federal Reserve

policymakers were willing

to start raising short-term

in the Federal Reserve's benchmark short-term interest rate for about five

"The working assumption among investors was that the Fed was going to keep short-term interest rates as kept the federal funds rate, the interest banks charge each other to borrow money, near zero since December 2008 in an effort

to support the U.S. financial system by keeping borrowing costs low. The rate

Trader Luiai Muccitelli, left, and specialist Frank Masiello work on the floor of the New York Stock Exchange Wednesday, Feb. 19, 2014. U.S. stocks were mixed in early trading Wednesday as investors waited to hear from the Federal Reserve later in the afternoon.

(AP Photo/Richard Drew)

interest rates sooner than previously expected.

The market was mixed most of the day, then turned lower after 2 p.m. (1900 GMT), when the Fed released the minutes from its January policy meeting. The minutes revealed that some policymakers "raised the possibility that it might be appropriate to increase the federal funds rate relatively soon."

That came as an unwelcome surprise to many investors, who haven't had to worry about increases low as possible for as far as the eye can see," said Jack Ablin, chief investment officer at BMO Private Bank, which oversees \$66 billion in assets.

The Dow Jones industrial average lost 89.84 points, or 0.6 percent, to 16,040.56. It had been up as much as 95 points earlier in the day. The Standard & Poor's 500 index fell 12.01 points, or 0.7 percent, to 1,828.75 and the Nasdaq composite fell 34.83 points, or 0.8 percent, to 4,237.95.

The Federal Reserve has

has remained close to zero since then.

In more normal years, shortterm interest rates were the Fed's main tool for regulating the U.S. economy. Even small changes in its benchmark borrowing rate could have an impact throughout the economy by raising or lowering interest rates on many kinds of loans, including home mortgages and business loans. Since the financial crisis, the Fed has turned to less traditional ways of stimulating the economy, including the Fed's current bond-buying program.

It's unlikely that the Fed would raise interest rates soon, especially since the Fed is in the middle of winding down its bond-buying program. Newly installed Federal Reserve Chair Janet Yellen and her predecessor Ben Bernanke both repeatedly indicated that the central bank wouldn't raise rates until 2015 at the earliest.

Nonetheless, the comments from Fed policymakers caught many investors off guard.

"Any time we hear 'increase in rates,' we listen," said Jonathan Corpina, a trader on the floor of the New York Stock Exchange with Meridian Equity Part-

Energy stocks were among the few sectors to close higher, helped by a surge in natural gas prices.

Natural gas jumped 60 cents, or 11 percent, to \$6.15 per 1,000 cubic feet, the first time it's been over \$6 in four years. Natural gas has climbed sharply this year, due in large part to the cold weather that has plagued most of the country, leading to higher-thanusual demand.

Natural gas companies Chesapeake Energy and Devon Energy rose more than 2 percent. Energy giant Chevron rose 89 cents, or 1 percent, to \$113.60, making it the second-biggest gainer in the Dow 30.

Signet Jewelers buying Zale for roughly \$900M

DALLAS (AP) — Signet Jewelers said Wednesday that it agreed to buy Zale Corp. for roughly \$900 million to help it expand in North America. Shares of Zale soared more than 40 percent in premarket trading Wednesday, while Bermuda-based Signet Jewelers Ltd.'s stock rose more than 9 percent. Signet, which operates 1,400 stores in the U.S. under the names Kay Jewelers and Jared The Galleria of Jewelry and 500 stores in the U.K. under the names H. Samuel and Ernest Jones, said it will pay \$21 per share. That's a 41 percent premium to Zale's \$14.91 Tuesday closing price. Dallas-based Zale, which operates 1,680 stores in North America under names including Zales, Gordon's and Peoples, among others, has about 32.9 million outstanding shares, according to Fact-Set. Also part of the deal is about 11.1 million in warrants, a security issued by a company that gives the holder the right to buy securities, owned by Golden Gate Capital, a 22 percent stakeholder in Zale. Signet entered into a voting and support agreement with Golden Gate.

The companies value the deal at \$1.4 billion. Excluding the roughly \$500 million in debt Zale had as of Oct. 31, according to SEC filings, the deal is worth about \$900 million.

Zale returned to a profit in its most recent fiscal year, which ended July 31. More recently the chain reported its holiday sales in stores open at least one year, a key retail metric, rose 2 percent during November and December. Meanwhile, Signet reported the key figure rose 5 percent during the same period.

The acquisition still needs approval from Zale shareholders. Theo Killion is expected to remain Zale CEO. Killion said in a statement that the move will help accelerate growth, coming after Zale completed its "multi-year turnaround program to return to profitability."

Marlboro maker Altria taking e-cigs US-wide

M. FELBERBAUM **AP Tobacco Writer** RICHMOND, Virginia (AP)

 Marlboro maker Altria Group Inc. said Wednesday that it plans to expand its MarkTen electronic cigarette brand across America in the second quarter.

Altria's Nu Mark subsidiary first launched MarkTen in test markets in Indiana and Arizona late last year. The company has said the disposable e-cigarette, which can be reused with a charging kit and additional cartridges, provides a more consistent user experience

through its "Four Draw" technology that closely resembles the draw of a traditional cigarette.

The owner of the biggest U.S. cigarette maker, Philip Morris USA, was the last of America's major tobacco industrywide push to diversify beyond the traditional cigarette business, which has become tougher in the face of tax hikes, smoking bans, health concerns and social stigma.

Electronic cigarettes are battery-powered devices

that heat a liquid nicotine solution, creating vapor that users inhale. Devotees say e-cigarettes address both the addictive and behavioral aspects of smoking. Smokers get their nicotine without the more than companies to market an 4,000 chemicals found in electronic cigarette in an regular cigarettes. And they get to hold something shaped like a cigarette, while puffing and exhaling something that looks like smoke.

> Altria said consumer spending on electronic cigarettes in the U.S. reached about \$1 billion. Increased

awareness and trial of ecigarettes have driven category growth, and the company estimates that 90 percent of adult smokers are aware of the products and about two-thirds have tried them.

At an investor conference Wednesday, CEO Marty Barrington said the category is "just leaving the starting gates" but the company "has made meaningful progress toward leadership in a short time."

"It's really early," he said. "Consumers are still choosing. 🔲

Coke to amp up marketing in face of earnings slump

© 2014 Cox Newspapers

ATLANTA -- Stung by a drop in both profit and revenue at the end of last year, Coca-Cola says it will redirect \$1 billion into marketing over the next two years.

The Atlanta-based beverage giant, like other big players in the non-alcoholic beverage industry, is struggling to stem declines in sugary-drink consumption in North America -- the cornerstone market for the industry.

On Tuesday Coke reported that fourth-quarter profit fell 8.3 percent while revenue dropped 4 percent. For the year, profit fell 5 percent on a 2 percent revenue decline.

Coca-Cola Chief Executive Officer and Chairman Muhtar Kent said the company will turn things around through innovation, improved distribution and more advertising.

because the company is beverage maker declines reinvestment'' program.

Cola's budget is important to discuss its marketing budget. Coke said it will get the already said to spend that money from an expanded much annually, though the internal "productivity and

Americans blame soft drinks such as Coke as a contributor to their expanding waistlines

increasinaly and are drinking less than

they have in the past. In turn sales have slid, especially for diet products, which the industry has traditionally offered as an alternative to full-caloried drinks. Smaller can sizes and different calorie configurations with mid-cals have offered more choice, but failed to stem the downward momentum for sodas.



Bottle tops of Coca-Cola 8 oz. bottles are photographed in Doral, Fla. The Coca-Cola Co. reported quarterly financial results on Tuesday, Feb. 18, 2014.

(AP Photo/Wilfredo Lee)

Adding \$1 billion to Coca-

Carlsberg: beer demand falling in Europe, Russia

(AP) — Carlsberg says it expects beer sales to fall this year in western Europe and Russia, but continue to grow in Asia.

The Copenhagen-based group made the forecast Wednesday as it announced that its fourthquarter net sales fell slightly to 15.7 billion kroner (\$2.9 billion) and beer volumes dropped 3 percent.

Net profit nevertheless rose

COPENHAGEN, Denmark 1.13 billion kroner from 192 million kroner a year earlier, mainly because the comparative 2012 figures included discontinued operations in Ukraine and closures in Russia.

> Revenue in 2013 increased slightly to 66.6 billion kroner, chiefly because of growth in Asian markets. Carlsberg said Wednesday that Asia would remain a main target of investments.

CEO Joergen Buhl Rasmusmore than expected to sen said the group had

delivered "solid earnings growth," adding Carlsberg will focus on further strengthening its operations in Russia and Asia.

The group expected western European and Russian beer markets to decline slightly in 2014 while the Asia will continue to grow in line with 2013.

The poor demand in many regions was chiefly due to a slowdown in global economic activity.

While western Europe is Copenhagen.

hugely important to the company and Russia remains Carlsberg's strongest market, the future lies in Asia.

Last year, the group acquired Chongging Brewery in China and now controls 60 percent of the shares, and has started construction of breweries in Myanmar and China.

Carlsberg shares went up 6.5 per cent to 581.5 kroner in midday trading in

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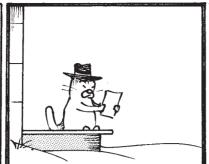
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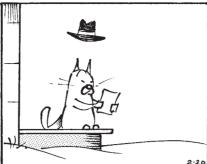
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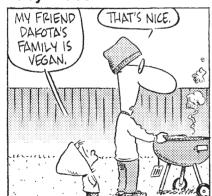
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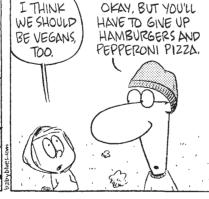




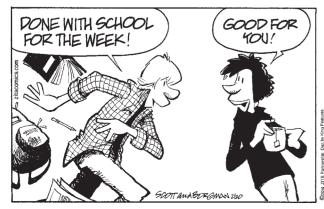


Baby Blues











Conceptis Sudoku

7	6			5		1
	7	9		3	6	8
5	7		2		9	
	9		3		4	7
1	5	2		9	7	
8		6			2	4

Difficulty Level ★★★

Sudoku is a number-placing puzzle based on

a 9x9 grid with several given numbers. The object is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the same number only once. The difficulty level of the Conceptis Sudoku increases from Monday to Sunday.

er	6	5	7	9	1	2	8	3	4
answ	9	1	8	7	4	3	5	6	2
Yesterday's puzzle answer	თ	4	2	8	5	6	7	1	9
nd s	5	3	9	6	7	1	2	4	8
rday	8	2	6	4	3	9	1	5	7
/este	1	7	4	2	8	5	3	9	6
	4	8	5	1	6	7	9	2	3
	2	6	3	5	9	8	4	7	1
	7	9	1	3	2	4	6	8	5

ACROSS

- 1 Painting and sculpturing
- 5 Participate in a school bee 10 Old magazine
- title 14 Boxing match
- 15 Bert's buddy 16 In a lazy way
- 17 Gray wolf
- 18 Screwdriver ingredient 19 Merriment
- 20 Came forth 22 Shuns
- 24 Traveler's stop 25 Shoe sole ridge 26 French farewell 29 Happiness
- 30 Adolescents 34 Uncle __ Rice 35 Layer of turf
- 36 In __; refusing to face reality 37 CBS competitor 38 Dispute settler 40 Pass away
- 41 Pie bottoms 43 Pros opposite 44 Beatles movie 45 24 __ gold
- 46 __ up; bind 47 At __; in the beginning 48 Like measles. the flu & many
- other diseases 51 Observes 54 Like income
- you report on a Form 1040 58 Deserve: merit 59 Blaze residue 61 Bedspring, e.g. 62 Hoodlum 63 Lunch & dinner 64 Actor Azaria
- 65 Takes to court 66 Deviously 67 Makes angry DOWN
- 1 Competent 2 Kitchen or den 3 Toothpaste

container

- - penalty 29 Occupation 31 Large sea duck

Created by Jacqueline E. Mati

4 Building levels

6 Nudge; spur on

9 Rent long term

10 _ up; take life less seriously

Monty Python

11 Eric __ of

12 Piloted

21 African

13 Observes

antelope

Provide foo

25 Document that

alters a will

27 Actress Winger

oneself, as a

26 Taken __;

surprised

28 Bring upon

for a banquet

5 Early bedtime

7 Conclusion 8 __ to happen; very probable

- 32 Tacks 33 Snoozed
- COURSE HANDBILL

Wednesday's Puzzle Solved

35 Yrbk. section 36 Lion's lair 38 Upper room 39 Foot digit 42 Nest egg

44 Small grill 46 Fez dangler

47 Michael J. 49 Widens a hole

50 Impudent 51 Hair coverings 52 Hawaiian island 53 Real; genuine 54 Blab 55 Wild hog

56 Chain piece 57 BPOE folks 60 Dobbin's dinner



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Bumblebees getting stung bad by honeybee sickness

SETH BORENSTEIN AP Science Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — Wild worldwide bumblebees are in trouble, likely contracting deadly diseases from their commercialized honeybee cousins, a new study shows.

That's a problem even though bumblebees aren't trucked from farm to farm like honeybees. They provide a significant chunk of the world's pollination of flowers and food, especially greenhouse tomatoes, insect experts said. And the ailments are hurting bumblebees even more, according to a study published Wednesday in the journal Nature.

"Wild populations of bumblebees appear to be in significant decline across Europe, North America, South America and also in Asia," said study author Mark Brown of the University of London. He said his study confirmed that a major source of the decline was "the spillover of parasites and pathogens and



In this July 5, 2011 file photo, a bumblebee alights on the bloom of a thistle in Berlin, Vt. Increasingly sick domesticated honeybee populations are infecting the world's wild bumblebees, a new study in the journal Nature finds. It's a problem because wild bees, which are doing far worse than their managed cousins, handle a big chunk of pollination for food, such as coffee, tomatoes and blueberries.

Associated Press

honeybee hives.

Smaller studies have shown disease going back and forth between the two

disease" from managed his is the first to look at the problem in a larger country-wide scale and include three diseases and parasites. The study tracked kinds of bees. Brown said nearly 750 bees in 26 sites

throughout Great Britain. honey, like honeybees. And it also did lab work on captive bees to show disease spread.

What the study shows is that "the spillover for bees is turning into (a) boilover," University of Illinois entomology professor May Berenbaum, who wasn't part of the study, said in an email. Study co-author Matthias Furst of the University of London said the team's research does not definitely prove the diseases go from honeybees to bumblebees. But the evidence points heavily in that direction because virus levels and infection rates are higher in the honeybees, he said.

Bumblebees probably pick up diseases when they go to flowers after infected honeybees, Furst said. And sometimes bumblebees invade honeybee hives and steal nectar, getting diseases that way, he added. Bumblebees can be nearly twice as big as honeybees, can sting multiple times and don't produce surplus

The latest research shows bumblebees are hurt more by disease, Brown said. In general, the average wild bumblebee lives 21 days, but the infected ones live closer to 15 days, he said. And while honeybee hives have tens of thousands of workers and can afford to lose some, bumblebee hives only have hundreds at the most.

"It's like Wal-Mart versus a mom-and-pop store," Berenbaum said in an inter-

Studies have shown that bumblebees provide \$3 billion worth of fruit and flower pollination in the United States, while honeybees are closer to \$20 billion, Berenbaum said.

The new study did not look at colony collapse disorder, which is more of a mysterious problem in North America than elsewhere. Other diseases and parasites have killed even more honeybees than the more recent colony collapse disorder.

Aztec dog burial site found in Mexico City

OLGA R. RODRIGUEZ Associated Press

MEXICO CITY (AP) — Archaeologists on Friday announced the discovery of "an exceptional" old burial site under an apartment building in Mexico City containing the remains of 12 dogs, animals that had a major religious and symbolic significance to the Aztec peoples of central Mexico.

Previously, the remains of doas have been found

accompanying remains or as part of offerings, experts with Mexico's National Institute of Anthropology and History, or INAH, said in a statement. But this is the first time a group of dogs has been found buried together at one site.

"This is definitely a special finding because of the number of dogs and because we have found no connection to a building or with the deceased," said

human archaeologist Rocio Morales Sanchez.

> Aztecs believed dogs could guide human souls into a new life after death on earth, and could guard pyramids and other monuments when buried under them.

> The dogs were buried at around the same time in a small pit between 1350 a 1520 A.D., the heyday of the Aztec empire.

> The team of archaeologists determined when the dogs were buried through ceramics and other items found in nearby pits under the apartment building in the populous Mexico City borough of Aztacapozalco, Sanchez Morales said. Michael E. Smith, an anthropology professor at Arizona State University who was not involved in the project, said the discovery is important because it is



In this Jan. 17, 2014 image released on Friday, Feb. 14, 2014 by Mexico's National Institute of Anthropology and History (INAH) shows canine skeletons unearthed by investigators in Mexico City.

Associated Press

the first such find.

"This is not the first time a burial of a dog has been found, but it is the first find where many dogs were carefully buried together, in a setting that is like a cemetery," Smith said.

Morales Sanchez said they will need to dig deeper to see if there are other items that could help them find out why the animals were buried in that area.

Smith said it will be important to see the results of the analysis of the bones.

"That work will tell us about the breed of these dogs, and it may tell us how they were killed," he said.

"The full significance of the finds is rarely obvious at time of excavation: the analysis will give the full story."

Archaeologist Antonio Zamora, who works at the excavation site, said a biologist told the team the remains belonged to medium-sized dogs with full sets of teeth, likely common





Could 'Wolf' mark end of DiCaprio's Oscar drought?

JESSICA HERNDON AP Film Writer

Hotel.

BEVERLY HILLS, Calif. (AP) — Leonardo DiCaprio is poking his head out of a poolside room at the Beverly Hilton

It's afternoon, and a swarm of media outlets is lined up outside, chatting with Oscar contenders after the Academy Awards' annual luncheon for nominees. Nominated for lead actor for his role as an excess-obsessed stockbroker in "The Wolf of Wall Street," DiCaprio stands to gain plenty of attention if he's viewed, but he goes unseen.

Still, he can't conceal his curiosity. "What's going on out there?" he asks with child-like intrigue, lowering his brow. "Why are there only two people on pool floats?" Turns out, they're models hired to liven up the background of an entertainment show's feed.

"That's corny," DiCaprio says with a laugh. But surely the 39-year-old actor understands the allure of overdoing it.

Decadence is what fueled "Wolf," a film that's gained him two Oscar nominations for acting and producing. DiCaprio has been nominated for three other Academy Awards, starting with a supporting actor bid for playing a teen with autism in the 1993 drama, "What's Eating Gilbert Grape." He's been overlooked each time.

This could be his year. Is he frustrated he hasn't won? "Here, I'll show you the card they gave me today" (at

the luncheon), he says, rummaging through his pockets after setting aside the electronic cigarette he says he puffs to "relieve the stress of life." He retrieves a small white card he calls "that little football chalk-up" listing his film stats. Leaning in, he points to the portion that reads: five nominations, zero wins. With a heavy chuckle he looks up and says, "Zip!" With the card back in his pocket, DiCaprio adds: "It's quite interesting. People think I feel I'm overdue for something ..." He stares at the ground for a moment, collecting his thoughts. "Anyone wants to be accepted by their peers, but the truth is every year is unique and everyone is just going to vote for who they think is worthy."

Nominated for lead actor Oscars for "The Aviator" and "Blood Diamond," DiCaprio has lost to Jamie Foxx and Forest Whitaker (he lost the best supporting actor statuette to Tommy Lee Jones). This year, he's up against Christian Bale, Chiwetel Ejiofor, Bruce Dern and Matthew McConaughey, who is considered DiCaprio's biggest threat for his portrayal of a rodeo-loving Texan with HIV in "Dallas Buyers Club." "We haven't seen Leo and McConaughey paired off in any award show," says Tom O'Neil, editor of the awards prediction site goldderby. com. "The assumption is Leo can't do it."

But this wouldn't be because he lacks skill. DiCaprio, whose first big film role was



In this Jan. 7, 2014 file photo, actor Leonardo DiCaprio attends the National Board of Review awards gala at Cipriani 42nd Street, in New York.

Associated Press

opposite Robert De Niro in 1993's "This Boy's Life," has starred in a number of films that gained Oscar attention, including two best picture winners: "Titanic" and "The Departed." ''Gangs of New York," ''Catch Me if You Can," ''Revolutionary Road," ''Inception," ''Django Unchained" and last year's "The Great Gatsby" have also earned Academy attention.

"It's as if the old men in the Academy look at someone like Leo and say, 'You have the money, the fame, the babes, but here's one thing you can't have,'" adds O'Neil. "We've seen a history of it. Paul Newman didn't win until he was past the age of 60. Often, if you are old or if you let yourself go to hell like Matthew Mc-

Conaughey did in 'Dallas Buyers Club' by losing a lot of weight, the Academy awards you."

Many major Hollywood talents have endured Oscar snubs. Neither Alfred Hitchcock nor Stanley Kubrick ever received directing trophies. At the risk of gaining comparisons to the late actor Peter O'Toole, who was nominated eight times without a win, DiCaprio could go home empty-handed again.

"The thing about it is no matter what film he's in, even if you didn't like the movie, you leave the theater and go, 'That guy just never misses,'" says DiCaprio's "Wolf" costar Jonah Hill, who is nominated for a best supporting actor Oscar. "Watching Leo work on 'Wolf,' I understand

how brilliant he is at what he does. He didn't miss a single moment of that character." He's been particularly dedicated to the Oscar campaign for "Wolf" — DiCaprio even appeared on "Saturday Night Live" with Hill. "Wolf" marks the actor's fifth collaboration with Martin Scorsese. It's a project he takes extreme pride in, largely because he was part of its development.

"The fact that I brought it to Scorsese and put the financing together ... all of these elements add a whole other level of responsibility," he says. That includes defending the racy material in the film, which has gained a bad rep for glorifying greed. "I've never been a part of a film that had this sincere level of controversy around it," DiCaprio says. "But I want to have films out there that cater to an audience that I think is yearning for something that is a little more outlandish."

His hunch proved spot-on. "Wolf," costing \$100 million to make, has earned over \$230 million worldwide. "You make these movies, you work as hard as you possibly can, you put your life on hold and you hope for the best," adds the actor.

"I've had the same mentality ever since I got my first movie," he says. "I got my foot in this door and I am going to continue to jam it in there and grind."

Rob Reiner to be honored by Lincoln Center

NEW YORK (AP) — Lincoln Center will honor Rob Reiner with its 41st annual Chaplin Award.

The Film Society of Lincoln Center announced Tuesday that the director and actor will receive the award at a gala April 28. Film Society Board Chairman Ann Tenenbaum called the 66-year-old Reiner a "master multi-hyphenate" who has made "some the most enduring and entertaining films in recent history."

Son of the comedy legend Carl Reiner, the Bronx-born Reiner has directed films including "When Harry Met Sally ...," "This Is Spinal Tap," "The Princess Bride" and "Stand By Me." His acting work has ranged from "All in the Family" to, most recently, "The Wolf of Wall Street."

Previous Chaplin Award honorees include Billy Wilder, Alfred Hitchcock and Tom Hanks. Last year, it was given to Barbra Streisand.



This Dec. 17, 2013 file photo shows actor-director Rob Reiner at the premiere of "The Wolf of Wall Street" in New York.

Associated Press



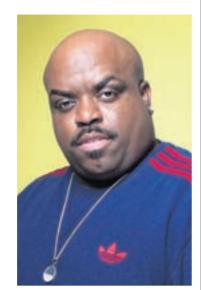
Cee Lo Green: I'm not returning to 'The Voice'

NEW YORK (AP) — Cee Lo Green says he's quitting as a coach on "The Voice." The singer-songwriter-actor announced on Wednesday's "Ellen DeGeneres Show" that he won't be coming back "at all."

He already was taking a break from the sixth season of the NBC talent competition, which begins airing Monday.

But Green told DeGeneres that he plans to continue his relationship with NBC, with which he has a development deal. NBC confirmed Green's departure from the show and expressed hopes to work with him on future projects.

Green was one of the original coaches when "The Voice" premiered in 2011. He appeared in seasons one through three, as well



This Oct. 19, 2012 file photo shows musician Cee Lo Green in New York. Associated Press

as season five.

Adam Levine, Blake Shelton, Usher and Shakira will serve as coaches for the upcoming "Voice" season.



This image released by the Tribeca Film Festival shows Nas in a scene from the documentary, "Time is Illmatic."

Associated Press

Nas documentary to open Tribeca Film Festival

NEW YORK (AP) — The Tribeca Film Festival will again kick things off with music, opening its 13th annual edition with a documentary on Nas and a performance by the rapper.

The New York festival announced Wednesday that it will open April 16 with "Time Is Illmatic," a documentary on Nas' 1994 debut album "Illmatic." Following the film premiere, Nas will perform the album in full.

Tribeca has in recent years increasingly turned to music documentaries to begin its film festival.

Last year's festival started with the Brooklyn indie band the National and the documentary "Mistaken for Strangers." In 2011, Cameron Crowe's Elton John and Leon Russell documentary, "The Union," was followed by a set by John.

The festival runs April 16 through April 27.□

iTunes launching music festival at SXSW

NEKESA MUMBI MOODY

AP Entertainment Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — iTunes is putting its stamp on South by Southwest, piggybacking on the annual event with its own music festival.

The company said Wednesday it will debut its popular iTunes Festival, a free concert series held in London for the past seven years. While the London version is a 30-day event, the U.S. festival will feature five nights of rock, country, pop and hip-hop at South by Southwest, an international



This April 17, 2012 file photo shows Chris Martin, lead singer of Coldplay, performing in Edmonton, Alberta, Canada. Associated Press

showcase for music, film and interactive projects to be held next month in Austin, Texas. "We're pretty excited about doing this for the first time here in the U.S. at South by Southwest," said top Apple executive Eddy Cue in an interview Tuesday. "One of the cool things about trying to do the festival is that it's all about the music, the musicians and the fans," Cue said. "You want it in a really close atmosphere where the fans are getting to see these

musicians in places they'll never see them again, because they play in much bigger venues." The iTunes festival will be held March 11-15 at ACL Live at the Moody Theater, where Austin City Limits is held. The first night will include performances by Coldplay, Imagine Dragons and London Grammar. Coldplay said it was "thrilled" to be playing on opening night, adding: "It's a great honor for our band and we hope everyone has a fantastic time."

Other performers include Keith Urban, Willie Nelson, Pitbull, Zedd and newcomer Mickey Guyton. Cue said other acts will be announced later. One artist who likely won't be appearing is Kanye West, who performed at the London festival in 2009. During a concert in New Jersey last weekend, he called out Apple CEO Tim Cook, singing via auto-tune: "Tim Cook, the head of Apple, stop trying to get performers to play your festivals for free, you are rich as (expletive)."

Cue declined to comment on West's criticism. The iTunes festival in London typically attracts artists like West and Coldplay. Lady Gaga, Elton John, Justin Timberlake and Katy Perry were among the performers at the Roundhouse Theater last September. The festival will be streamed live and on-demand through the iTunes store, iTunes radio and on Apple devices.

Cue, Apple's senior vice president of Internet software and services, said iTunes had long considered having a U.S. counterpart to its U.K. festival, but had struggled to find the right fit. SXSW turned out to be a natural. "It's got a great vibe for music, and it's centrally located, so timing-wise it works well to broadcast across the U.S.," he said. While Cue didn't say whether the iTunes Festival at SXSW would become an annual event, he pointed to London as an example of how it could grow.

"We'll see where it leads us. I can tell you when we did the London one for the first time, we did it for a week in London and look what it's become."q

Vanessa Williams eyes Broadway's 'After Midnight'



This Sept. 24, 2012 file photo released by Starpix shows Vanessa Williams, a cast member in ABC's "666 Park Avenue," in New York. Associated Press

MARK KENNEDY
AP Drama Writer
NEW YORK (AP) — Vane

NEW YORK (AP) — Vanessa Williams wants to stay up after midnight.

The actress, singer and former Miss America watched the matinee performance of "After Midnight" on Wednesday and then broke it to the cast backstage that she has signed up for a stint in the Broadway show celebrating

Duke Ellington's years at the Cotton Club nightclub. Says Williams: "It's an honor to jump in. It's a well-oiled machine, up and running and I think it'll be a perfect fit

Williams, who next month turns 50, will start as a guest vocalist on April 1 and end May 11, replacing Kenny "Babyface" Edmonds and Toni Braxton, who in turn replaced k.d. lang.



Barons of Broadband



PAUL KRUGMAN
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Last week's big business news was the announcement that Comcast, a gigantic provider of cable TV and high-speed Internet service, has reached a deal to acquire Time Warner, which is merely huge. If regulators approve the deal, Comcast will be an overwhelmingly dominant player in the business, with around 30 million subscribers.

So let me ask two questions about the proposed deal. First, why would we even think about letting it go through? Second, when and why did we stop worrying about monopoly power?

On the first question, broadband Internet and cable TV are already highly concentrated industries, with a handful of corporations accounting for most of the customers. Once upon a time antitrust authorities, looking at this situation, would probably have been trying to cut Comcast down to size. Letting it expand would have been unthinkable.

Comcast's chief executive says not to worry: "It will not reduce competition in any relevant market because our companies do not overlap or compete with each other. In fact, we do not operate in any of the same ZIP codes." This is, however, transparently disingenuous. The big concern about making Comcast even bigger isn't reduced competition for customers in local markets - for one thing, there's hardly any effective competition at that level anyway. It is that Comcast would have even more power than it already does to dictate terms to the providers of content for its digital pipes and that its ability to drive tough deals upstream would make it even harder for potential downstream rivals to challenge its local monopolies.

The point is that Comcast perfectly fits the old notion of monopolists as robber barons, so-called by analogy with medieval warlords who perched in their castles overlooking the Rhine, extracting tolls from all who passed. The Time Warner deal would in effect let Comcast strengthen its fortifications, which has to be a bad idea.

Interestingly, one cliché seems to be missing from the boilerplate arguments being deployed on behalf of this deal: I haven't seen anyone arguing that the deal would promote innovation. Maybe that's because anyone trying to make that argument would be met with snorts of derision. In fact, a number of experts - like Susan Crawford of Benjamin N. Cardozo School of Law, whose recent book "Captive Audience" bears directly on this case - have argued that the power of giant telecommunication companies has stifled innovation, putting the United States increasingly behind other advanced countries.

And there are good reasons to believe that this isn't a story about just telecommunications, that monopoly power has become a significant drag on the U.S. economy as a whole.

There used to be a bipartisan consensus in favor of tough antitrust enforcement. During the Reagan years, however, antitrust policy went into eclipse, and ever since measures of monopoly power, like the extent to which sales in any given industry are concentrated in the hands of a few big companies, have been rising fast.

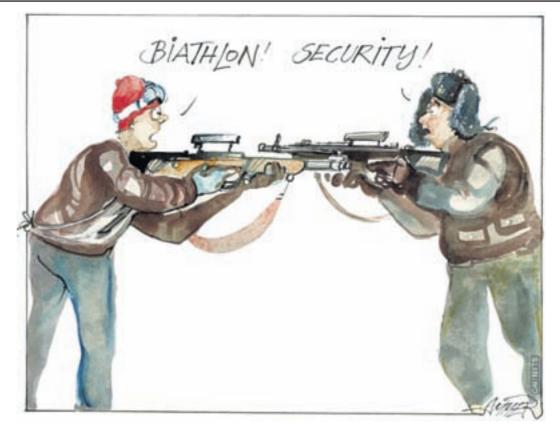
At first, arguments against policing monopoly power pointed to the alleged benefits of mergers in terms of economic efficiency. Later, it became common to assert that the world had changed in ways that made all those old-fashioned concerns about monopoly irrelevant. Aren't we living in an era of global competition? Doesn't the creative destruction of new technology constantly tear down old industry giants and create new ones?

The truth, however, is that many goods and especially services aren't subject to international competition: New Jersey families can't subscribe to Korean broadband. Meanwhile, creative destruction has been oversold: Microsoft may be an empire in decline, but it's still enormously profitable thanks to the monopoly position it established decades ago.

Moreover, there's good reason to believe that monopoly is itself a barrier to innovation. Crawford argues persuasively that the unchecked power of telecom giants has removed incentives for progress: Why upgrade your network or provide better services when your customers have nowhere to go?

And the same phenomenon may be playing an important role in holding back the economy as a whole. One puzzle about recent U.S. experience has been the disconnect between profits and investment. Profits are at a record high as a share of GDP. yet corporations aren't reinvesting their returns in their businesses. Instead, they're buying back shares, or accumulating huge piles of cash. This is exactly what you'd expect to see if a lot of those record profits represent monopoly rents.

It's time, in other words, to go back to worrying about monopoly power, which we should have been doing all along. And the first step on the road back from our grand detour on this issue is obvious: Say no to Comcast.



Discovering Hillary's Secrets



FRANK BRUNI © 2014 New York Times

Her perseverance often awes me. Her arrogance sometimes galls me. And her particular braid of high-mindedness and high-handedness almost always leaves me puzzled and exhausted.

But what I've been feeling for and about Hillary Clinton over the past week is sadness. Does she have even a smidgen of privacy left? Can she utter a syllable or think a thought with any assurance that it won't be exposed, analyzed, ridiculed?

When she was talking decades ago with Diane Blair, whose journals are part of "The Hillary Papers," she no doubt assumed an audience of one: her dear friend. Her best friend. But this corner of Hillary's life, like every other, has now been put on public display. Get as close as you like. Gawk. Judge.

I'm not suggesting that The Washington Free Beacon, the news site that presented "The Hillary Papers," did anything unusual or wrong. By recognizing that an archive of documents at the University of Arkansas hadn't received much scrutiny and going through it, The Free Beacon provided candid, intimate glimpses of the Clintons that hadn't existed before. This was indeed a scoop, one that many other media organizations would have been happy to trumpet.

But to absorb it in the context

of the endless drip-drip-drip about Hillary over the years was to worry that we've lost sight of any boundaries and limits - that maybe even Hillary herself has stopped hoping for anything kinder. When the archive was opened to the public in 2010, she gave a tribute to Blair, who died in 2000. Details in the documents were fresh. Most of the truths they fleshed out weren't. We already knew that Hillary had found tortured rationales for Bill's infidelities. We already knew that her compromised brand of feminism accommodated the vilification of women who dared to threaten the couple's purchase

What's at least as interesting is what the documents say about the political arena the Clintons inhabit: the toll it takes, the cynics it makes. Early in her White House years, Hillary's guard has already gone up. Blair chats with Janet Reno, Bill Clinton's attorney general, and writes, in April 1993, that while "Janet wants to connect" with Hillary, she "finds HC a 'mask.'" This is even before the fever pitch of impeachment and the Starr Report in all its lurid detail and the sustained analysis of every provisional hairstyle and the millions of pages by authors determined to turn her into a symbol of this, that or the other. She has been called a Rorschach, but as I read "The Hillary Papers," I couldn't stop thinking of her as a carcass. With a tireless zest, we pick her clean.

The latest book about her, "HRC," by the journalists Jonathan Allen and Amie Parnes, was published last week. It focuses on recent years, and it is flattering: The Hillary here is resourceful and diligent and has enough guile and grace to win over the people whom she sets out to.

She's also obsessed with loyalty, which governs her decisions, leading to bad ones. That's perhaps inevitable when you've been so thoroughly peered and poked at. You do your damnedest to carve out a safe space.

Blair was surely supposed to be that, and it's not clear why she was taking notes or what she intended to do with them. It's also not clear that the Hillary in those notes is the truest one. With our friends, yes, we bare our souls. But we also let off steam, allowing ourselves a theatricality and sloppiness that exaggerate our emotions.

Blair's journals are the kind of material from which biographies and histories have long been woven. But it doesn't always surface so soon, and it is now augmented by the eavesdropping and tattling of Cabinet secretaries (see "Duty," by Robert Gates) and political allies and handlers eager to make themselves look better, even at a benefactor's expense (see "Game Change" and the robust genre to which it belongs).

Frenzied media feed on this, to a degree that arguably goes beyond our obligation to keep politicians honest, and it's troubling in two regards. How many decent, gifted people who contemplate public office look at what someone like Hillary endures and step away? And the people who aren't scared off: How cold and hard are they, or how cold and hard do they become?

"HRC" recalls that just after the 2008 presidential election, a photo came to light of one of Barack Obama's speechwriters, Jon Favreau, pretending to cup the breast of a cardboard cutout of Hillary. The image is shocking, but then again not. For a good long while, we've done with Hillary as we pleased, frequently looking past her humanity, routinely running roughshod over her secrets. She has gained so much - tremendous influence, significant riches - but lost so much, too. Was that the bargain she expected? Has she made peace with it?



America's Big Bet on Gluten-Free Products

STEPHANIE STROM © 2014 New York Times

The Girl Scouts recently introduced a gluten-free chocolate chip shortbread cookie to their annually anticipated line of sweet treats.

Vodka companies vie over which one of them was the "first" to introduce a glutenfree version of their products.

And Trader Joe's recently joked in an advertising promoting glutenfree foods that it was selling "Gluten Free Greeting in 2010.

In dollars and cents, sales of gluten-free products were expected to total \$10.5 billion last year, according to Mintel, a market research company, which estimates the category will produce more than \$15 billion in annual sales in 2016.

"I see this as part of the current American concern with digestive health, which is also responsible for the yogurt boom," said Harry Balzer, vice president at the market research company NPD Group, where

bilitating medical problems if not diagnosed.

An additional 18 million people, or about 6 percent of the population, is believed to have gluten sensitivity, a less severe problem with the protein in wheat, barley and rye and their relatives that gives elasticity to dough and stability to the shape of baked goods. "There are truly people out there who need gluten-free foods for health reasons, but they are not the majority of consumers who are

and can lead to other de- as a globe will continue to be concerned about what's going into our food supply."

> Rebecca Thompson, a marketing manager at General Mills, said relying on the data on levels of celiac and gluten sensitivity in the population to predict the staying power of consumer demand underestimated how many people were eating gluten-free products.

"When you think about the dynamics in a household, where there are likely to be als, underscoring the first change, to Rice Chex, with a major marketing effort.

Gluten-free customers are valuable, ringing up roughly \$100 in sales with their average grocery basket compared with \$33 for the overall average basket, according to Catalina Marketing.

Wegmans is now the country's largest seller of glutenfree products, having started developing such products in its private label lines in the 1990s.

"Up until about two years ago, our approach pretty much was that if we could make any Wegmans brand product gluten-free, we did," said Trish Kazacos, the grocery chain's nutritionist, who has gluten sensitivity. Now, its suppliers provide

so many gluten-free products that it no longer needs to develop as many of its own.

"Back in the day, we had maybe two shelves of gluten-free," said Charlie Gardner, chief merchant for the Nature's Marketplace at Wegmans.

"Now some stores have up to 100 feet of linear space dedicated to gluten-free products."

One of the biggest challenges for big grocery chains like Wegmans is that the supply of gluten-free products is largely made up of small local and regional brands.

"There are few dominant national brands, and consumers are very loyal to their local brands," said Tim Mahan, general manager for Nature's Marketplace. "Trying to strike a balance between having a meaningful assortment but still satisfying that loyalty is a challenge."

Interest in gluten-free products also has been a boon for fruits and vegetables and other foods that are inherently gluten-free. Popcorn Indiana, for example, has labeled its ready-to-eat popcorn gluten-free since before the fad began, in part because the chief executive, Hitesh Hajarnavis, has children who have food allergies.



Michelle Marinelli and her son, Joshua check out a box of gluten-free ice cream cones at a Wegman's Food Market in Woodbridge, N.J., Jan. 31, 2014. More than 1 in 10 households are buying some gluten-free foods, and the fast-rising sector that was thought to tally \$10.5 billion last year could top \$15 billion by 2016, according to one market research firm.

(Matt Rainey/The New York Times)

Cards 99 Cents Each! Every Day!" - even though it then went on to say the cards were not edible.

Makers of products that have always been glutenthat quality in ads and on their packaging.

And consumers are responding with gusto. The portion of households reporting purchases of gluten-free food products to Nielsen hit 11 percent last year, rising from 5 percent when gluten is ingested

he has followed the food industry for some 30 years. "About 30 percent of the public says it would like to cut back on the amount of gluten it's eating, and if you free, including popcorn, find 30 percent of the pubpotato chips, nuts and rice lic doing anything, you'll Nonetheless, Morris says include Bisquick, Pillsbury crackers, are busy hawking find a lot of marketers right she does not think people and Betty Crocker, might there, too."

Never mind that a Mayo Clinic survey in 2012 concluded that only 1.8 million Americans have celiac disease, an autoimmune disorder that causes the body to attack the small intestine

driving this market," said Virginia Morris, vice president for consumer strategy and insights at Daymon Worldwide, a private brand and consumer interactions company.

will be "over" gluten-free foods as quickly as they have dumped the cupcake craze.

"The reason I do believe this has legs is that it ties into this whole naked and 'free from' trend," she said. "I think we as a country and

three other people eating at the same time as one person with celiac or gluten sensitivity, it's much easier to prepare one meal for everyone," Thompson said. General Mills, whose brands seem like the least likely company to embrace gluten-free.

But in the mid-2000s, more and more customers began seeking alternatives to its traditional products.

So in 2008, it began reformulating its Chex cere-